

# Mexican Life

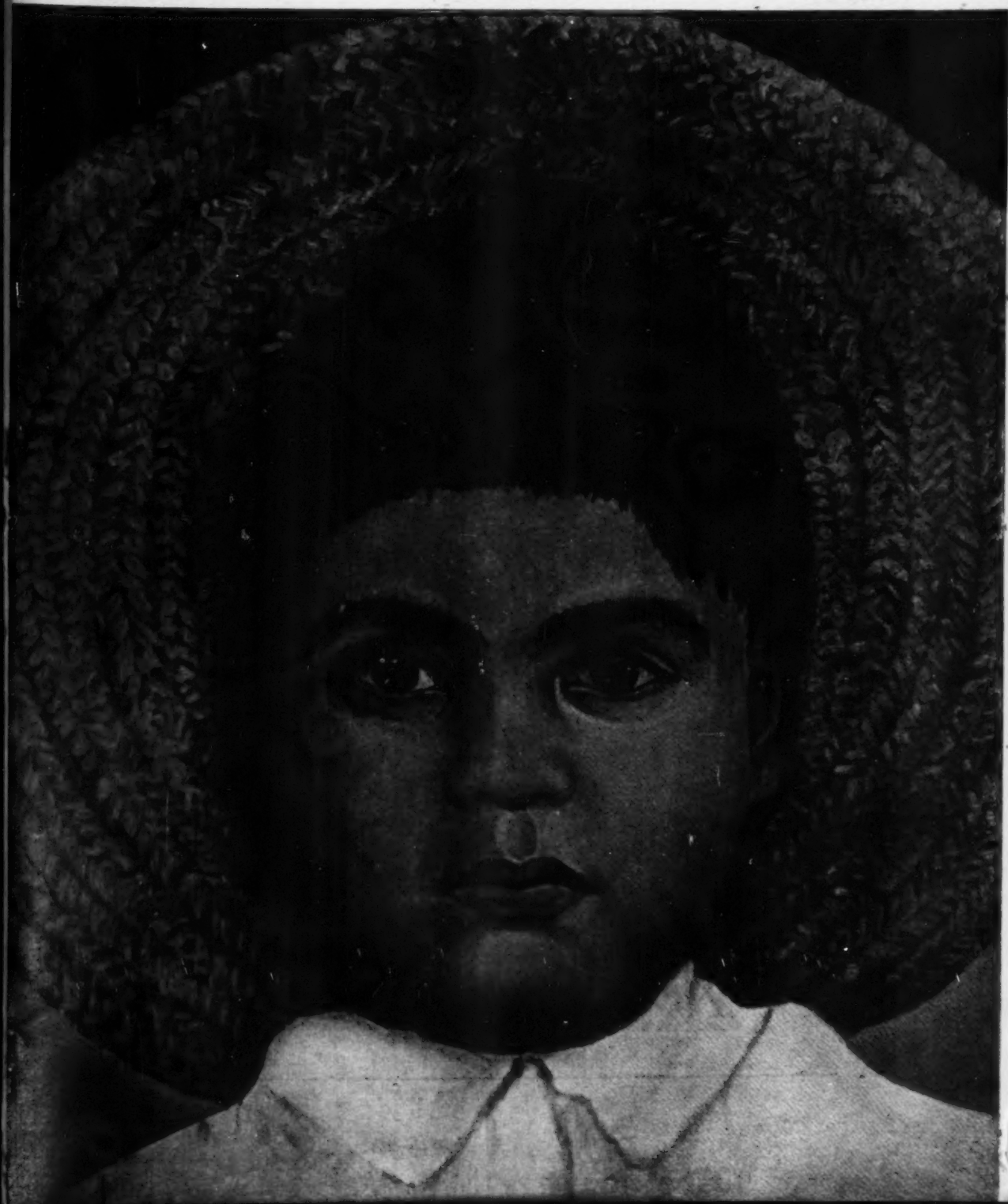
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*Mexican Monthly Review*

### CONTENTS

DECEMBER, 1952

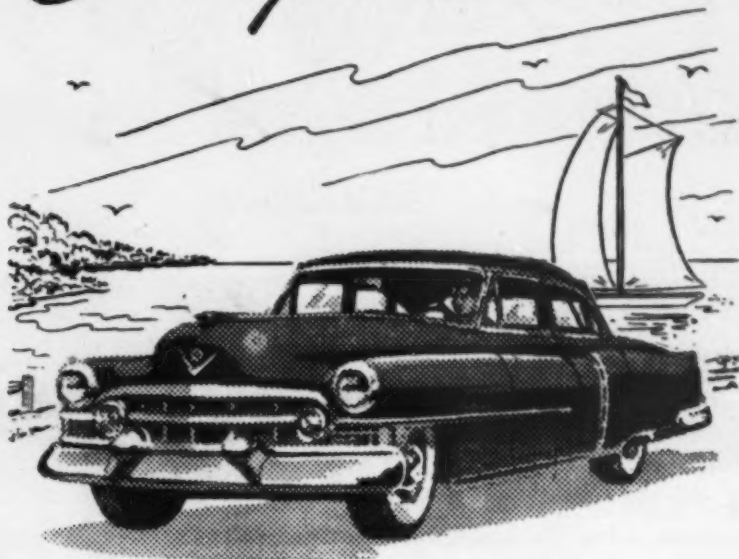
Number 12, Volume XXVIII

	Page
MEXICO'S NEW PRESIDENT. Editorial .....	9
BUS DRIVER. Article. By Sylvia Martin .....	10
WATER COLOR. By Charles X. Carlson .....	10
THE SEEDS OF DEATH. Story. By Alice Hartman .....	11
OIL. By Marion Greenwood .....	11
TAXCO AND GUANAJUATO. Article. By Trent Elwood Sanford .....	13
OIL. By A. G. Warshawsky .....	13
PRIMITIVO. Article .....	15
L'NOLEUM CUT. By Carl Pappé .....	15
CIUDAD OBREGON. Article. By John W. Hilton .....	17
WATER COLOR. By M. Topchevsky .....	17
OTHER SELF. Poem. By Ma. guerite Janvrin Adams .....	18
DRAMA OF THE ANCIENT. Article. By Jose Juan Arrom .....	19
TEMPERA. By A. Godovius .....	19
PATTERNS OF AN OLD CITY. By Howard S. Phillips .....	22
CORNERS OF ANTIQUITY. Article. By Hudson Strode .....	23
CHERAN: A VILLAGE OF MEXICO. Article. By Ralph L. Beals .....	26
OIL. By Doris Rosenthal .....	26
VALETTA SWANN. Art Critique. By Guillermo Rivas .....	29
UN POCO DE TODO .....	33
LITERARY APPRAISALS .....	34
CURRENT ATTRACTIONS. By Vane C. Dalton .....	39
ART AND PERSONAL NOTES .....	43



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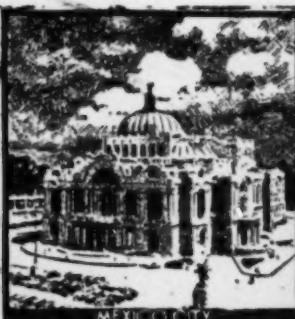
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

## Mexico's New President

**T**HE inaugural address delivered on the first day of this month by Adolfo Ruiz Cortines before the joint body of Congress and Senate, when he took the oath of office as President of the Republic of Mexico, manifests the basic policy and the salient aims that will be pursued by his government. Delivered in clear, precise and categorical terms, the message defines a pledge before the nation, a public avowal to serve the ideals of democracy by seeking every practical means to serve the interests of the underprivileged majority, to improve the lot of the common people.

"My supreme effort," said the new President, "will be centered at the goal of strengthening national unity, of elevating the cultural level of the people, of improving individual and collective economic standards. We will endeavour to coordinate agriculture, industry, communication and commerce; to induce the higher income sector to curtail superfluous expenditures and to invest its money in productive enterprise.

"We will pursue the aim to increase petroleum production, to further electrification, to expand metallurgical production, to stimulate manufacturing industry, to rehabilitate and enlarge the railway network, to construct new highways and hydraulic systems whereby to increase agricultural crops.

"True to our revolutionary convictions, we will pursue the full realization of the agrarian reform.

"We must find the point of equilibrium between agriculture and industry. We must be watchful of the growing movement of labor from agricultural to industrial fields. We must seek an utmost industrial outlet for our native raw materials, and in this way to achieve a decrease in imports and an increase of exports in manufactured goods, and we must see that our industry provides our agriculture with the machinery and fertilizers it must have for its expansion. These are the aims we will pursue for the economic progress of Mexico.

"It is necessary to fix a classification of industrial products destined for internal consumption, insofar as they may be strictly essential, useful or merely luxurious, in order to channel our limited financial resources in a manner that they will be more profitable for the majority of our population.

"It is also necessary to make a more farsighted and judicious use of our mineral reserves, to invest Mexican capital in the mining industry and to endeavour that our country industrializes our metals.

"The most dire of all problems which at present affect the majority of our population is without any doubt defined in the dearth and scarcity of food supplies. With the firm aid of the entire nation, as an emergency plan which we will carry out during the

forthcoming year, we will invest all expedient moral and material means to lower the cost of such basic necessities as corn, beans, sugar and cotton cloth and thereby to place them within reach of all the people.

"It will be the purpose of this government to disencumber the congested apparatus of commerce by reducing the legion of unnecessary middlemen; to stimulate commerce that is satisfied with fair profits, those commensurate with the capital invested and the services rendered, and by utilizing the most efficient and appropriate channels to saturate the centers of consumption with goods of prime necessity. I moreover submit to the legislative body the project for an amendment of Article 28 of the Federal Constitution, so as to increase and render more drastic the penalties that may be meted out to hoarders and monopolists.

"The entire population must cooperate loyally in order that public officials and employees conduct themselves with absolute honesty, and thus help to achieve public and administrative honesty in Mexico. We shall proceed with utmost energy against venal or untrustworthy public servants, and we have, in fact, proposed the necessary amendments of the Law of Responsibility of Officials and Employees, in order to impose drastic and exemplary penalties.

"In its international relations, Mexico must firmly maintain its traditional and intrepid position in defense of justice, which is the only way toward comprehension and fraternity among nations. It must maintain invariably its policy of cordial and loyal friendship, in accord with norms of equality, or reciprocal respect, and of independence and sovereignty of nations.

"Hard everyday realities compel us to embrace our ideals with greater fervor. We know that the secret of individual and collective progress depends upon an adequate reciprocation of necessary means. The prosperity of a country rests, beyond the abundance of its natural resources, in the spirit of its mankind. Mexico must supplant the riches it has been denied by nature with the tenacious labor of its men."

The above highlights of the President's inaugural address provide a forecast for the next six years. Administrative honesty, and a determined effort to achieve a more equitable distribution of national income and wealth, to further the country's economic and social evolution toward democratic goals, from a condition of very few very rich and very many very poor to a state of common well-being, to a veritable national prosperity, is the aim Adolfo Ruiz Cortines has set for his government.

"I will never defraud the faith which the people have placed in me," was the new President's concluding pledge.

# Bus Driver

By Sylvia Martin

**R**ATTLING down a busy street, a bus suddenly shuddered and collapsed like the one-horse shay. One moment it was a complete vehicle; the next it was gone, leaving its passengers sitting amid the debris and the driver clutching the unattached wheel with a look of incredulity on his face.

I saw this happen in Chile. Why I haven't yet seen it in Mexico is a mystery to me.

Bumping with Gabriel Chavez over roads that began as footpaths, became burro trails, and are now corrugated tracks with mudhole hazards, I can never keep from crying out when I hear the clank that tells me still another piece of the machine's bowels has fallen out. The conductor, mounted on the ladder behind, signals by slapping the roof, and Chavez stops. We wait until the lost item is collected and added to the scrapheap beside the driver.

He shrugs. "It is not important." It never is.

Off we jolt again, and if I am bored with the shaking and bouncing, I can reflect that at the very moment thousands are being likewise bounced and shaken over the broad uneven surface of Mexico.

The people are always on the move. Entire villages trek to neighboring markets and fiestas. Like purposeful armies they march on holy days over valleys, plateaus, and mountains to the more potent shrines. Apart from the communal migrations, families and individuals set out to visit relatives, seek out a new life, or transact urgent business in the big city. One day I came upon four curiously costumed Indians staring into the window of a sports shop in the capital. They had walked twenty days from a village in Michoacán, carrying a petition to the President.

The people walk—until the first bus appears on the trails beaten by their feet. Then they ride, going farther from home and more frequently, drawn into the orbit of a distant city. In Cuernavaca, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, and other large market centers, they sit along the curbstones wrapped in their serapes or rebozos. Once anthropologists studied them as primitives whose folk customs were untouched by modern

influences. Now, waiting for the homeward bus, they lick ices on a stick and read the funny papers.

When the bus has cut the new economic and social course wide and deep enough, come the engineers from Mexico City, and a paved highway begins to stretch over the ancient footpath...

Beyond the main highways meander the countless byroads which link village to village, and village to town. They cross unbridged streams, and use the stony beds of dried rivers. They amble over sliding hillocks, curl around fallen trees, narrow to mere paths, and widen to trackless plains. They are choked with dust in the dry season and churned to mud in the rains. The visiting motorist, planning a long trip, hears of them as short cuts. "Can I get through?" he asks, tracing the broken lines on the road map. "Why not?" he is answered. "The buses go every day."

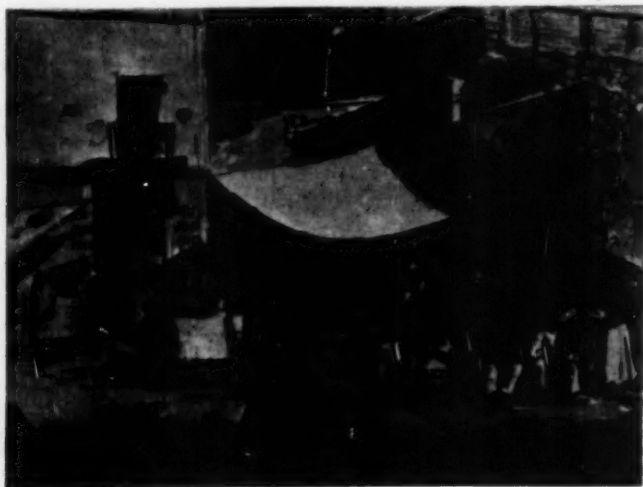
The bus that Gabriel Chavez drives is eight years old, he thinks—well, maybe ten. "Who knows how many years it carries?"

And who knows what it once was? Piece by piece it has been made over through the years until now it is a mechanical patchwork, any resemblance between which and the original is purely coincidental. It gives out strange noises while it pumps carbon monoxide fumes into its passengers—but it goes. Chavez holds it together with string, wire, thin, and anything he may find on the road when it balks. "Other 'camiones' may break down, but not mine." Like all drivers, he is armed against disaster not only with his scrap heap, but with an amulet of the Virgin of Guadalupe hung on the dashboard.

Chavez began his bus career three years ago as a conductor. This functionary not only collects the fares; he is also an apprentice learning the habits of the old coaches and helping to put them together in the garage after the day's run. Many conductors never rise above that stage, but it took Gabriel only a few months to become a full-fledged chauffeur. He is proud of the record.

From six in the morning until eight at night he

Continued on page 65



Water Color.

By Charles X. Carlson.



OIL

By Marion Greenwood.

## The Seeds of Death

By Alice Hartman

**A**FTER THE SUNLIGHT, it was dark within the narrow room, and the smell of candles lingered like a forgotten guest in the corner where José-María had lain. Four dried pools of wax marked the place on the floor. She stared at the spot and she could not believe that so small an enclosure had held the body of a man. It was not true. Her man had filled the house, and the fields, and the streets of the town. Now he was in the air she breathed, and in the trees, and in the songs of the birds, and in the sunlight. And when it rained, he would be in the rain, too. But never in the arroyo. No, never there.

"It is not true!" she whispered, shocked, toward the empty corner.

"Here, comadre a glass for you."

The hand which held out the wine was a woman's hand, but it was as large as a man's and the fingers were broad and tough-grained, like those of a laborer in the fields. It was the hand of Bargas' wife, who was called Tía, and Guadalupe Elena remembered then that Antonio Bargas and his five children and this woman with the ugly hands worked every season with the cotton that grew in the San Joaquin Valley. She had seen much of these hands since José-María's death, here, where death was a woman's business. After she had washed and clothed the poor, bony corpse she had been obliged to allow the hands to help her at last.

There had been much to do: the scrubbing and washing of clothes, of curtains, of floors, of windows, of hair, of animals and food, the leather polishing of shoes and the silver polishing of the few pieces that still remained in her possession, the buying of the funeral candles and obtaining their blessing by the priest, the sewing of the shroud and the making of the slippers that José-María would need to wear in his coffin, the purchase of food and wine and the baking of the funeral cakes. Without the wife of Antonio to attend in all these matters she would have been obliged to accept the niggardly sympathy and double-faced help of Consuelo Alvarez, the churlish wife of Domingo, he who would fall happily into debt for six months in order to spend a single day at Santa Anita.

She looked into Tía's moon-shaped eyes and tried to feel grateful. The eyes of the woman who returned that look were kindly but without thought, the head was inclined forward as if to receive a blow, the brow was wrinkled with uncertainty, each furrow a question of herself, and the mouth as slack, without emotion or design; it was the face of a woman well acquainted with the drudging, uncomplicated habits of servile work and the woman's body, shapeless, lacking grace and pride of self spoke the rest of this truth to her. She looked at Tía and made a kind of smile,

but she knew in her heart that she could feel no gratitude to her. What a terrible thing it is, she thought, to be bereaved and to be forced to abandon certain necessary standards, to be forced to pretend, to open her house like this to people for whom she felt, at best, a lurking contempt and shame and pity, to be in debt to cloddish servitors like Tia Bargas. What a terrible, what a bitter thing, it is!

The wine glass was nudged toward her with a sudden, insistent gesture. The contents spilled a little.

"Go on. Take it," Tia urged. "It will do you good."

"It is good, verdad?" Tia said, smiling broadly. "It is the best from Villalobos."

The wine was strong on her tongue and she knew that Tia spoke true when she praised it. But nevertheless she set the glass down, feeling degraded and made wretched again by all these gathering compromises.

At that moment she saw Villalobos himself. He was just inside the door seated on one of the folding chairs that had been borrowed from the church basement for the occasion. She wondered why she could not make him out clearly; he was like a black shadow disjoined from its more graphic host. Then she realized that this was because his body was bent forward, with his head lowered toward the region of his chest, so that she was looking at a gray cloud of hair in the middle of all the black. But why this elaborate posture of grief? It did not suit the dog's look; it was an insult to the spirit of her own grief.

Fury commanded her. She would drive him from the house, and, all the fat, brown hypocrites with him. José-María did not need the prayers of such as these, nor could he possibly be honored by their merrymaking in his name.

She moved toward the door, her brooding black eyes intent on the gloomy head of Villalobos. Then she noticed for the first time that a shoe was dangling from his hand. Her glance darted to the floor. His left foot was shoeless, the white sock dirty and with a hole in it by the joint of the great toe. It seemed to be awollen there. She pressed her lips together: surely the air was foul with the vapor of smelly feet?

Villalobos shifted his position. He was about to look up. He would see her, staring at him. She was afraid he would misunderstand her interest. She turned quickly away and found herself looking directly into the eyes of her son. They held each other's glance for a long moment, isolated in time. Their thoughts, a hundred of them, a thousand, leaped across the busy space between them, sketches of a command, an entreaty, a reminding word, a half-forgotten promise, questions unanswered with the anguish still nailed in them, and other questions and other answers resolved in bitterness and pain and long-distilled hope, doubts, denials, thoughts crying for the grave and the end, thoughts crying for forgiveness, for understanding, for peace and love, moreover love.

"Ay-vi-yi..."

Startled, she wheeled about.

"...yi-yi!"

It was a grito of absolute abandon, and it came from the throat of a slim youth who had just appeared on the threshold. All eyes in the room were upon him, all talk hushed by the cry he had made. He stood framed in the doorway, clad in a suit the color of the sky behind him, a short figure made shorter by the broadened shoulders of his too-much tailored coat, and yet a graceful figure, arms akimbo, head held high and a little to one side as though other gritos stored within had shifted ballast a little. A narrow brown strap cut

diagonally across his chest and to this was attached a guitar, the scroll and tailpiece striking out at absurd angles from behind his knee and ear to create an odd crucero silhouette.

"Hola! It's Paco!" Antonio Vargas said in a loud voice.

"Sure it's me. Who else but?"

Someone else laughed. She recognized Domingo Alvarez' singular barking laughter.

Domingo's wife hissed for silence. "Ssh!" she said, and the sound slithered across the room.

Paco made a languid gesture toward his breast pocket and pulled out a comb, which he proceeded to draw carefully through his thick, wavy hair, as black as polished coal. During this deliberate ritual, he kept his eyes shifting from person to person until he had taken and held for a moment the attention of everyone present. Now his eyes rested upon her for an instant. They were bold, they were as blue as the suit he wore, they were eyes without questions in them. She liked neither their boldness, nor their mestizo blueness, and there was a look about such self-confidence that was almost contemptuous. She was both disturbed and annoyed by this, until she decided that it was nothing more than an expression of insolence.

If he was waiting for a welcoming sign from her, she would never give it; quickly she looked away and concentrated on a branch of the pepper tree which grew outside the door. The fern-like leaves were José-María. He was green and he was in the branches and he was watching her now. She prayed to him for help, but there was despair in her heart. She wanted his voice and there was only the barranca wind in the trees. And such a wind would never frighten away all the people.

There was a movement in the doorway. Paco did not need her invitation. He was coming toward her, unhurried, with a slightly negligent sway of the hips as though he were moving to the rhythm of a slow rhumba.

"I'm sorry about your husband," he said, not unkindly.

She kept silent, her gaze fixed on the pepper branch.

"Have a drink, Paco," Tia Vargas said. "In honor of the dead man. And then you will play us some music?"

"Sure, why not?"

Tia turned to her; the supplicating wrinkles went deep across her brow like a washboard. "José-María would like the music, don't you think, comadre?"

"José-María has his own music." There was the subtle whish of the breeze through the green fingers of the branch. Now a brown linnet was talking to itself. "José-María does not need any other music."

"But he would not want us to be gloomy," Tia continued in a soft, coaxing tone. "It is not good for him if we weep and moan on such a day."

"Paco plays good, señora," Antonio put in. "He will do him a fine honor."

"I don't know about that 'fine honor' business, but I'd like to play some of your husband's favorite songs. Just tell me what."

"José-María has his own music."

No one said anything for a moment.

Finally, Tia murmured in a low voice "Over there. Paco. Get yourself something to drink."

Other voices began to make themselves heard again, and the din soon drowned out the sounds from the pepper tree.





Oil.

By A. G. Warshawsky.

## Taxco and Guanajuato

Trent Elwood Sanford

**I**T MAY be mere coincidence, but it is an interesting one, that the two finest of the "mining churches"—in fact, two of the very best of the Churrigueresque churches of Mexico—happen to be located in the two most picturesque and utterly fascinating cities in Mexico, the mining cities of Guanajuato, some three hundred miles by motor northwest of Mexico City and capital of the state of the same name, and Taxco, a hundred miles south of the national capital in the state of Guerrero.

Guanajuato is a city of some 20,000 people, though it had several times that many in the heyday of its prosperity, when it was second only to the national capital in wealth. With monumental buildings in its center and flat-roofed gray adobe houses climbing up mountainsides to follow narrow, tortuous streets, its atmosphere is a combination of Moorish Spain, southern France, and the hill-towns of Italy, with a bit of Biblical Palestine thrown in.

Taxco is a much smaller place, of four or five thousand people, with whitewashed houses wearing red tile roofs also climbing up mountainsides, with colorful gardens and tiled balustrades and porches climbing over each other, and narrow, crooked streets weaving a crazy pattern among them. Its atmosphere is very much Spain, a little of the north, a little of the south, with a dash—just a slight dash—of Switzerland.

The high mountains which hem Guanajuato into a narrow gorge away from all the world are rather austere and forbidding, with ominous clouds hanging

closely over them; the mountains which roll around Taxco, their green slopes patterned with sunlight streaming from among fleecy clouds, appear to want to be pushed in as one kneads dough, until one achieves respect for them by hiking over their wooded summits.

\* \* \*

The original Indian town of Taxco, the name of which comes from the Aztec *Tlachtl* or the Tarascan *Tlach-co*, meaning "Ball Court," was several miles beyond the present city, but when Cortés arrived shortly after the Conquest, discovered rich veins of silver, and established a mining camp where the "new Taxco" now stands, the Indians moved over to help build the Spanish town which has recently become so famous as a Colonial monument. It was almost two hundred years later that its great boom came. In 1717, José de la Borda, French by birth, Spanish by early training, came to Taxco and, apparently with more good luck than scientific knowledge of mining, and in spite of ups-and-downs, finally amassed a fortune. It is said that, in his early, unsuccessful days at prospecting, he was returning in discouragement to the capital when his mule stumbled over the mine that changed the tide of his fortunes. His oft-quoted motto "God gives to Borda and Borda gives to God" took physical and glorious form, when the stream of silver which flowed from the mines had made him fabulously rich, in the parochial church which rises

out of the center of the city whose other buildings it dwarfs—an almost perfect gem of the Ultra-Baroque at its height.

Begun in 1751 by Diego Durán and Juan Cabañero, the great Church of San Sebastián and Santa Prisca was completed seven years later at a cost said to exceed eight million pesos. It is evident that it was the intention of the founder to spare no expense in achieving, for the place where God had given to Borda, a monument that should excel anything else which had been built in Mexico, to show Borda's appreciation to God. Though not the largest church in the country, it is, perhaps, the most complete example of ecclesiastical art that the period produced anywhere.

The richly ornamented facade is a superlative expression of the Baroque rather than Churrigueresque, with free-standing composite columns flanking the arched doorway, tall, slender salomónicas, above in pairs, and a great wealth of carved stone ornament in between. Its twin towers, rising above warm brown stone bases whose plain surfaces are interrupted, on the front only, by a vertical row of openings with carved stone frames, are replete with ornament boldly and vigorously handled, yet gracefully outlined against the sky. The one major criticism which could be directed against the exterior effect is the apparent contraction of the bases of the towers, beyond which the ornament above projects. The heavily ornamented upper part of the towers rests upon a widely projecting cornice which, below, returns to a face which is on the same plane as the background of the ornament above, giving the towers a topheavy appearance and imparting to the bases of the towers a feeling of unfortunate slenderness. Yet one feels that a correction of this apparent lack of support would tend to squeeze the ornamental portion of the facade, and that therefore a slightly wider spacing of the towers as well as greater weight to the bases would have resulted in a more harmonious whole (without, however, going to the extremes of the cathedrals of Mexico City, Puebla, and even Morelia). The builders of the church must have anticipated the dense growth of Indian laurels out of which the towers now seem to project and which helps to solidify the otherwise too slender facade. Looking at photographs taken fifty years ago, when those trees were but shrubs, the elevation of the church appears to be positively skinny.

The great dome, built on a high octagonal drum containing tall segmental-arched windows which light the interior, is covered with glazed tiles to portray in bright colors Aztec sunbursts which seem to emphasize the inscription on the frieze of the drum: "Gloria a Dios en las alturas" (Glory to God in the Highest). External ribs lead to a tile-domed lantern surmounted by a cross.

The interior, the stonework of which has been restored to its natural and beautiful pink color, is literally filled with elaborate altars in the height of the Churrigueresque style, of carved wood heavily gilded and covered with polychrome figures, giving an effect of exceeding richness and splendor. There are twelve of these retablos, including three in the adjacent chapel, all in a fine state of preservation.

A sense of unity in interior decoration is aided by the fact that the decorative painting throughout was done by one artist, Miguel Cabrera, one of the really great muralists of Colonial Mexico. In the transepts are great canvases depicting the martyrdom of the two patron saints of the church. In the sacristy, especially, the painter did some of his finest work. The two ends of the rooms are occupied by large canvases, at one end "The Nativity" and at the opposite end "The Ascension of the Virgin"; while on the

sides of the room are other paintings of scenes from the life of Christ and of the Virgin.

The great church, built on a low platform now enclosed by a wrought-iron fence and gateway of comparatively modern design, faces a small plaza shaded by huge Indian laurel trees where is the center of life, where fiestas are held, where music is nearly always to be heard, and where the crowded camiones, piled high with luggage, pull up at noisy intervals to discharge and take on passengers traveling between Mexico City and Acapulco. The pavement of the plaza and of many of the streets consists of mosaics of small cobbles in many patterns and of many kinds of stones. Look carefully and you can find jadeite among them.

There are no sidewalks; the twisting streets are cobble paved from building to building, and throughout four centuries no wheeled vehicles ever used them. The plaza and the near-by streets are now lined with silvermithies and other little shops selling huaraches or curios; but mostly, and appropriately enough, there are silver shops, where displays in cases are arranged to attract the eyes of visitors, or where, in the smaller shops, workmen bend over their tables in the doorways painstakingly reproducing old Aztec designs.

From the little plaza the streets drop steeply down behind the church, on either side and to the right and left, or climb precipitously up in narrow zigzags to intersect trails winding around as they follow the contours of the barrancas. Into these barrancas spill clusters of white houses with red-tiled roofs at many levels, while other red-roofed houses climb up the ridges of the mountainside, all as if they were tiny toys piled promiscuously on the outstretched fingers of a great giant.

There are other churches too, all diminutive compared with the "great" church but picturesque as they unexpectedly appear around the bend of a narrow street or dot the panorama one gets from the towers of San Sebastián and Santa Prisca, or from the Guadalupe church high up on the mountainside above. I once climbed up far beyond that church in the tow of a small boy who finally insisted that if I would but go a little higher he could show me Cuernavaca. I was satisfied with the view of Taxco, an irregular sea of red roofs, interrupted by terraced gardens, forming a patch-work pattern of orange-red and dark green, spotted with white walls in some places supporting great blotches of lavender bougainvillea, in the foreground, the gnarled roots of an old ceiba tree writhing and twisting like the tentacles of an octopus on the edge of the precipitous trail, its branches spreading out to frame the scene below.

\* \* \*

To the left and right, deep barrancas, filled with banana trees, and scrub, and poinsettias growing wild, cut into the continuation of the pattern, more red-roofed houses climbing up the other sides, the open tile balustrades (citarillas) of their porches, in a variety of designs, supporting potted flowers which add rows of additional colors to the flower-filled, walled-in gardens terraced to the level of each house. Occasional tall papaya trees play a sudden staccato in the syncopated rhythm of the gardens. Some of the houses may belong to Americans, for the picture-town has become more and more a magnet drawing and holding visitors from up north; but they are more apt to be occupied still by the butcher, the baker, and the fireworks maker.

Farther below (it is as much below as beyond) women kneel over cement washing boards beside a pool which serves as a community laundry, and, here,

Continued on page 56



Lionel Cui.

By Carl Pappa.

## Primitivo

**S**UDDENLY Fordyce announced that he was going to Chapala and might not be back that night. The next morning Cayetano gave the little cough he uses to draw my attention when he has news to impart or a request to make.

"They say that the señor of here, the very rare señor, is in the lock-up."

"Oh?"

"They say that last night he was going round the streets of Chapala, drunken drunken, and at last the cops took him and threw him in the can."

The Professor had got the rumor by lunchtime. I said I had heard it.

"And what are you going to do about it?"

I said that I didn't know if it were true, that if it were and Fordyce wanted my help, it was quite easy for him to send to me, and that I didn't think he'd thank me for interfering unasked.

The Professor was pained. He was all intervention.

"And what shall you do if he doesn't come back tonight?"

He didn't come back that night. But the next day we heard that Fordyce had spent the night in jail, but he had paid his fine in the morning, and he had had a long binge that day, lasting far into the night but avoiding the police. He had been seen in half the cantinas in town, drinking with most questionable Mexicans of both sexes.

"You must do something about this," said the Professor to me.

"But according to our information he's not in the

prison, he's not sick, and he's not in any difficulty," I said.

The Professor worried at it like a dog at a bone, but for the life of me I couldn't see why I should go round nursemaiding my guests or trying to stop them making fools of themselves if they wanted to. I refused to do anything at all, and the Professor went so far as to say he was not sure that his conscience would not impel him to take action, but eventually it didn't.

"If you go to Chapala, Logan, you'll upset your stomach," said Mrs. Fountainney. "You know how those buses disagree with it."

Four days later Fordyce came back.

"Hello," said Mrs. Fountainney. "All right?"

"Perfectly," said Fordyce.

"We heard that you had been—er—arrested," said the Professor.

"Did you?" said Fordyce and slammed the door of his room.

In the days that followed he hardly emerged and then only to take a short walk. And a crop of tales came winging from Chapala. He had broken into someone's house; he had fallen off a roof; he had burned a boat on the beach; he had drunk three—or was it six?—bottles of hard liquor a day; he had bedded half the girls in Chapala.

"That's a very unhappy young man," said Mrs. Fountainney. "Badly brought up, of course, but very unhappy too."

Fordyce stayed in his room.

The gossip of the foreign colony went to town on



the incident. Fordyce was a Russian agent, a British agent, an agent of the F.B.I.; he had deserted from the Marines; he had escaped from Siberia; he had bribed his way out of a cuckoo hatch in Mexico City. He was the life and soul of many a gathering he would never have dreamed of attending. He stayed in his room.

Venustiano said, "They say in the village that if that señor, the señor with the sad angry face, comforts himself here as he did in Chapala, they say they'll beat him and throw him in the lake. Funny people, they often do worse themselves. But then they've always respected foreigners, until recently. To me, the señor seems a little mad, no more. Not much madder than most. The bad thing is, he doesn't pretend to be sane."

Fordyce's escapade was, however, soon forgotten in Ajijic. The very next evening there was a tremendous uproar. Shots were being fired in the plaza.

"Another fiesta," said the Professor. "D'you know I'm told they spend slightly more than half as much on fireworks as they do on milk."

In the morning the true facts came to light.

"Think, señor, just think!" cried Candelaria, setting down a basket of tomatoes on the breakfast table and putting on top of them a handful of small change, which rolled among the fruit. "Think! Last night they were killing a bull, a young bull, very strong, and he broke loose in Don Vicente's patio where they were killing him, and he killed one, poor thing, and to another he gave a big horn, and he broke the gate, and at the finish and the end the comisario shot him in the plaza! So what will we do since the Señor Professor has guests and Cayetano won't be able to wait at dinner?"

"D'you mean Cayetano got hurt?" I asked.

"Oh no," said Candelaria, retrieving five-centavo pieces from among the tomatoes and putting them on a pile of my manuscript. "But he has been up all night at the watch, and today in the afternoon is the burying, and he will have to go to that, and in any case he is too sad to do anything. He told me to tell you."

Candelaria looked at me as if I were unbearably obtuse and added a squashy tomato to the small change on my papers.

"But who was killed?" I asked.

"Why, Primitivo, of course," she said. "Cayetano's very great friend, his twin. And there is Paz, poor girl. What an affliction! Ay de mí!"

She went on for some time, telling me just where Primitivo had been goféd, and how she proposed to arrange for the Professor's party, and how Paz had sat all night without crying, not a single tear.

A gloom settled over the house, and all the women servants gossiped in hushed voices, genuinely sorrowful, but also gloating a little over the tragedy of a girl who had seemed fortunate beyond their dreams. Paz, who never smiled but whose grave eyes held a kind of quiet laughter and whose cheeks seemed al-

ways ready to form dimples, had been the envied, of all. Widowed now at nineteen, she was still after three years of marriage the village's most beautiful girl, with a skin the shade of rosewood and a proud sweet face. Primitivo's parents were people of substance, and though, at first, her family had opposed the match, his romantic carrying off of Paz to his house, followed by a real church wedding, had ostensibly mended all. Primitivo himself was a good-looking, likable youth. He had once, when singing with a group of mariachis in Guadalajara, received the offer of a fabulous radio contract and had chosen instead to return home to Ajijic. Not very bright, perhaps even a little stupid, thought the village, but a good fellow, ready to help his friends, easy going, honest. He had no need of any job I could offer him, but whenever I needed extra assistance, to fight the first lusty weed invasion of the rains or to wait at a party, he would come at once, and I had often seen him of an evening, unasked and unpaid, helping Cayetano, his boyhood friend, to wash and polish my car. Even after the birth of little Narciso, now a chubby two-year-old, he had remained, which is not common among the Indios, a devoted and faithful husband to Paz, and it had given one a little glow to meet them walking silently hand in hand along the beach, so young and radiant and content. It was a monstrous waste. Anyone in the village could have suggested several candidates for the bull's horns whom nobody would have much missed.

\* \* \*

I went to Primitivo's funeral. It was not dignified. The Ajijic cemetery, outside the village toward Jocotepec, is a dreary deserted plot, a desert or a paddock, according to the season, with a few broken monuments that only enhance its desolation. The Professor and I trundled in the car behind the coffin. Cayetano was a pallbearer, but Paz didn't go.

"We wouldn't let her," said Cayetano, "for she might have an attack, a strong pain in the heart, and she might suffocate and be unable to walk, and then we should have to carry her on our shoulders, as well as the great weight of our sorrow."

The road is uneven and though, no doubt, the bearers did their best, Primitivo must have had a rough passage in his narrow box. And then the grave was too short. They tried to coax the coffin into it, but it was no good, and finally they had to excavate further. Personally I have no great respect for corpses. For myself and those I love, I would wish the bodies to be disposed of as quickly, cheaply, and unfussily as possible. To many, however, ceremony is a comfort, and I can see no reasonable objection to it. But a ceremony that, like this one, degenerates into the grotesque is, I feel, shocking. But nobody, except perhaps the Professor, felt as I did. The Indios stood around, solemn and patient throughout the service, and as the coffin was finally lowered into the earth tears ran down dusty brown cheeks.





Water Color.

By M. Tychovsky.

## Ciudad Obregon

By John W. Hilton

**M**R. KIBBY'S leather shop is one of the most interesting spots in the bustling industrial town of Ciudad Obregón. As a tourist attraction, Ciudad Obregón would register below zero, since it seems to be trying in every way to become as American as possible. The result could hardly be called picturesque any more than many of our own cities that are suffering from growing pains.

Once the town was a peaceful little village named Cajeme, after the Yaqui chieftain. Irrigation brought a rice boom, and mills, for added employment. This sudden prosperity, with influx of imported goods, had some startling results. I saw electric refrigerators in kitchens with dirt floors sitting alongside of earthen water ollas and stone metates. Advertisements for boxing matches were pasted over bullfight posters. American-made radios blared American-played jazz from almost every doorway; and one place even had a pinball machine—which, by the way, was literally coining money. When I read some American writers on the subject of "How the standard of living should be raised in Mexico," I always wonder if they have ever visited Ciudad Obregón.

The people seem pretty happy, however, and the town has several redeeming features; principally, the saddle and leather shop, and its genial proprietor, Mr. Kibby.

Some Americans seem to have the ability to live in a country for many years and make their living there without allowing it to change them in any way or ever absorbing a bit of its real feeling, but—not so my friend Kibby. His place is a rallying point for American rice planters and millmen, who sit around in the afternoon over a cold glass of beer and discuss things American. On the other hand, almost every Mexican gentleman within a hundred-mile radius counts him a friend; and many times the two groups

meet on this common ground, finding that they like each other for reasons other than strict business.

Then, there is the third angle of the social life that converges on the leather shop. This is the group of incoming Americans. Business men, scientists, writers, artists, and game-hunters have somehow found out, over the "grapevine," that Kibby knows just about everyone in Sonora worth knowing, and how to get to all the places they want to find. He can write letters of introduction to head men in inland villages that change the whole aspect of things; or barter with the Yaqui tribes for some needed industrial material. Everyone comes to Kibby for information, and gets it.

His office is a clearing-house for all this, plus his own businesses, which include a hog ranch and several other projects. It is the sort of place where one feels at home the minute he sits down, but somehow never is able to get acquainted with all the things. The desk is littered with piles of letters, boxes of old coins, odd rocks, and maybe a map showing the way to some "lost gold mine." The walls are covered with rare skins, photos sent from hundreds of friends, and calendars of every vintage and several nationalities. Even the ceiling is hung with old spurs, Indian baskets, a stuffed eagle in flight, colored Indian hammocks, and odds and ends too numerous to mention or even to see at one time.

No matter what the visitor might be interested in—be it botany, zoology, mining or agriculture—Kibby can go over to the wall, or dig down in a drawer or box, and produce something interesting and unheard of along that line. Naturally, the kind of people one meets here are just as interesting and varied as the objects in the room.

I remember meeting an old gentleman from the Dominican Republic there one afternoon. This chap,

it seems, collects rare plants that are used for food and medicines, and then establishes them on his estate. He was passing through town and saw an odd, gourdlike, smooth-skinned fruit; hard as a rock. The man in the market said it was used for medicine. All you had to do was to cut out a hole in the top, pour some gin or tequila over the dried pulp and heart-shaped seeds; and the next morning the medicine was ready to use. There seemed to be some doubt in the mind of the seller just what it would cure; but he said it must be very good for something, since he sold a great many. Each customer got them for a different ailment.

This chap had bought several for seed, and was over at Kibby's trying to discover what type of tree, shrub, or vine produced the strange thing. Kibby wasn't quite sure either, but he had called up the Commissioner of Forestry, who promised to be down in a few minutes. Then he sent out for some cold beer; and the conversation ricocheted from the habits of boa constrictors through such subjects as the sex practices of the Australian bushmen, and the probability of the great ice masses in the glacial age having affected the level of the rest of the seas, thus connecting islands now separated and even continents. Our friend had traveled and read a great deal; and the beer spurred him on. He was a fountain of interesting and unheard of information. Howard and I were a bit uneasy; since we had left our wives at the hotel and had intended to be gone only a short time. Each time we rose to go, our friend broke into another story which we couldn't miss; or Kibby countered with a Mexican yarn that kept us there.

\* \* \*

Finally, we decided to make a break for it before we lost our happy homes; but were stalled by the gentleman from the Dominican Republic, who insisted that he was an expert on how to handle women. Being a bachelor himself, he was sure that most husbands approached the problem of handling their wives in the wrong manner. He said if we would but stay a little longer, he would give us the lowdown on the problem; and he did. Personally, I have never had the nerve to put any of it in practice, but, hearing him tell it, the whole thing sounded mighty simple. I remember one of the several dozen stories he used to illustrate his various points. He was bringing home

the importance of presence of mind.

The husband, it seemed, liked his poker games as thoroughly as his wife detested them. He was coming home late, with the utmost care and finesse born from long experience. He negotiated the hall stairs, shoes in hand, without a sound; the bedroom without a squeak, and was about to get into his bed, when he had to sneeze. They had twin beds, and the family pet slept alongside his wife's bed. She turned over, partially awakened, and extended one hand. "Was that you, Rover?" she asked. The gentleman, with presence of mind, licked her hand.

Finally, the Jefe Forestal arrived, and, after examining the fruit carefully, stated that he, too, had seen it in the market place for sale; but no one, except the Indians, ever saw it growing. But he knew how to solve our friend's problem. All he had to do was to plant the seed and sooner or later it would grow up into the tree, shrub, or vine; and the whole mystery would be taken care of. Our friend was delighted by this bit of philosophy, and agreed that it was the only sensible course to follow; since there was no way of changing the character of the plant, anyway.

About then, the traveler seemed to have a change of heart and said that he felt we had better get back to the hotel, to our wives. We started to bid him good-by; but he would hear nothing of it. He would accompany us for protection, he said. After all it was entirely his fault that we had stayed so long; and he was sure that the ladies would not be so rude as to reprimand us in the presence of a stranger, especially since he had decided to take all four of us to dinner.

The dinner was good; the host was entertaining; and the wives were polite, and pleased. The man was so altogether charming, in confessing that he had purposely kept us till late, so he would have this excuse to avoid dining alone, that I thought we had been forgiven. It almost worked. His hypnotic powers seemed to have turned the trick. The next morning, however, in the cold light of day, the whole affair seemed to lose its romance for the girls; and we got the dressing down, at the breakfast table, that we should have had at dinner. I tried to find the gentleman, to get a few more lessons; but he had left on the early train.

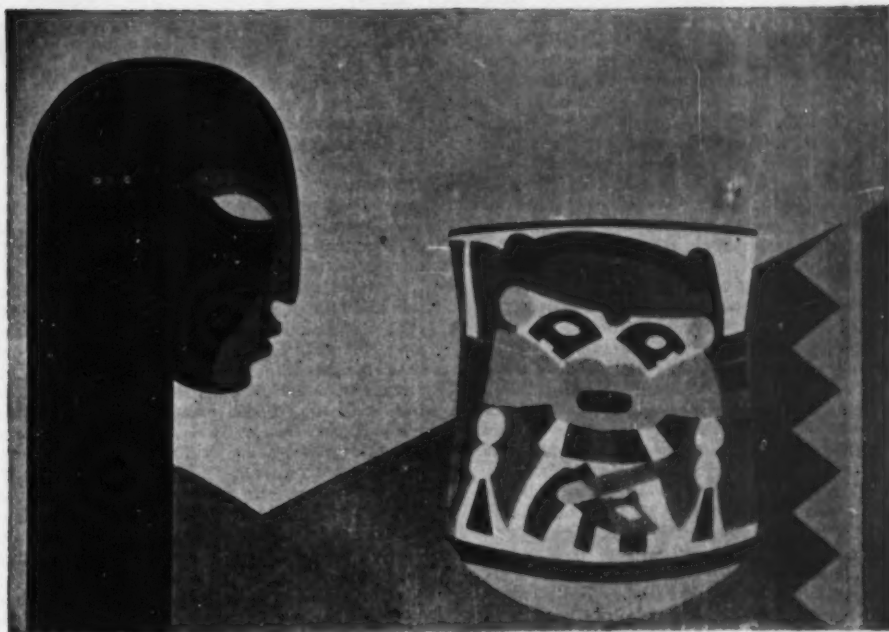
Since that first afternoon, I have visited Mr. Kibby often, and stayed as a guest in his house. There

Continued on page 50

## Other Self

By Marguerite Jenvin Adams

WHO is that on the opposite side of the street,  
Face in shadow? I can hear the feet,  
Though out of rhythm with mine—  
A lilting beat,  
Quite different from those who stumble by  
Searching the sky,  
The road, the landscape: such as I.  
Who is that on the opposite side of the street,  
Who wears those winged sandals on his feet?



Tempera.

By A. Godovius.

## Drama of the Ancient

By José Juan Arrom

**T**HE SPANISH AMERICAN THEATER is not simply Spanish drama written and performed in the New World. Although the Spanish language is used and the Hispanic influence dominates, other factors, no matter how subtle they may sometimes seem, have given an individual stamp to American theatrical art. One of the most decisive of these forces has been the underlying Indian culture. Acquaintance with pre-Columbian dramatic art is essential to a full understanding of our colonial theater and the delicate blending found in many later works.

Let's begin with the peoples who lived in the Valley of Mexico and the neighboring regions of Guatemala, Honduras, and Yucatan. The first report on their drama was made by Hernán Cortés in his third letter to Charles V. He found in Tenochtitlán "a sort of stage, which is in the middle of a plaza, made of lime mortar and quarry stone, square, about four and a half yards high and thirty paces across; . . . during fiestas and games the participants stood on this so that all who were in the marketplace and beyond could see what was going on . . ."

The chronicle known as the "Códice Ramírez," probably written by an Indian in the mid-sixteenth century, confirms the existence of stages and actors, and also supplies valuable details on the performances themselves. It tells us that the temple of Quetzalcoatl at Cholula "had a central patio where dances and witty farces were staged on the god's feast day; for this purpose there was a small platform, about thirty feet square curiously whitewashed, which was elaborately decorated for the celebration; it was surrounded with arches made of all kinds of roses and feathers, and birds, rabbits, and other pleasant things

were hung at intervals. Everyone gathered there after eating, and the players came out and presented farces, pretending to be deaf, lame, blind, one-handed, or stricken with colds, and to have come to ask the god to heal them. The audience laughed heartily as the 'deaf' made absurd replies, the 'cold victims' coughed and blew their noses, and the 'lame' limped about recounting their miseries and complaints. Other actors played the part of insects, some being dressed as scarabs, and others appeared as frogs, lizards, and so on, and once on stage they told the audience about their activities . . . Boys of the temple dressed up as multicolored butterflies and birds and climbed up in some trees that were planted there, and the priests of the temple shot at them with blowguns. The attacked and the attackers made clever remarks that greatly delighted the onlookers. After this was over, the celebration ended with a dance in which all the performers took part."

The beauty of the stage setting and the varied tone and subject matter of these "farces," as the author repeatedly calls them, are particularly impressive. As we have seen, one is a realistic travesty on human miseries: the second is built around a transfer of man's mental powers to the animals surrounding him (the same idea appears in Aristophanes' "The Frogs"); and the third is a delicate and suggestive spring rite to the goddess of flowers. Father Diego Durán threw more light on the last: "The dance they liked best was the one in which . . . they crowned themselves with roses and built a house of roses in the god Huitzilopochtli's temple and they put up artificial trees full of fragrant blossoms, and they seated the goddess Xochiquetzalli nearby . . . Some boys dressed as birds and

butterflies entered, bedecked with rich feathers, green and blue and red and yellow; they climbed the trees and moved from branch to branch sipping dew from the roses. Then Indians representing the gods came out, clad as the idols were dressed on the altars, and began to shoot at the birds in the trees with blowguns. Xochiquetzalli, the goddess of roses, . . . took the blowguns from their hands, and made them sit down near her, paying them the homage that such gods merited. She gave them roses and wafted incense around them and . . . told her representatives to comfort them."

We are also indebted to Durán for descriptions of other performances. There was one, for example, "in which masked dancers represented stooped old men, that was very witty and comical," and another "about a jester who pretended to jumble his master's words and get all his orders backwards." In still another, the participants, wearing bright make-up, pretended to be drunkards, "carrying pitchers and cups in their hands as if they were drinking, to give pleasure . . . to the cities. . ."

Father Durán tells us that "these Indians had many other kinds of dances and amusements for the feasts of their gods; they composed special songs for each idol, according to his virtues and powers, and long in advance of the fiesta held contests in which new songs and dances were chosen; they made various costumes of blankets and feathers and masks, adapted to the contents of the songs they had composed and to the solemnity of the feast; sometimes they dressed as eagles, other times as tigers, lions, soldiers, hunters, savages, monkeys, or dogs; and they had a thousand other disguises."

One presentation that looked to the uninitiated like a series of dances performed in animal costumes was actually an imposing tragedy of considerable artistic merit, deeply rooted in the Indians' customs and religious beliefs. Fortunately for us, it fell to the lot of a French priest, Abbé Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, to be sent to the Guatemalan town of Rabinal, where, perhaps due to the isolated location, one of these dramas was still being performed three hundred years after the Conquest. The Abbé's intelligence and understanding led the shy parishioners to reveal the secrets of their art, allowing him to witness the tragedy that had been handed down to them by their ancestors. The text, written in Quiché in 1859 and published by Brasseur in 1862, appears to be a survival of an authentic Indian spectacle.

There are five speaking characters: Ahau (Lord) Hobtoh, king of Rabinal; Rabinal Achí (warrior), son of Hobtoh and hero of the story; Cavek-Queché Achí, ruler of the Yaqui and enemy of the people of Rabinal; and two slaves of Hobtoh. The non-speaking characters are the queen, wife of Hobtoh; the Lady of the Green Feathers or the Precious Emerald, wife of Rabinal Achí; the twelve Tigers and Eagles, Rabinal warriors; and a great number of soldiers and slaves of both sexes. A wooden mask, delicately carved and painted, identifies each character; thus when one actor tires another can replace him.

The performance starts with a slow round dance by Rabinal Achí and the Eagle and Tiger warriors to the melancholy sound of the drum. Suddenly Queché Achí pounces on them, making threatening gestures; the dance speeds up and the dialogue begins. This consists of long, epic-like speeches, in which the performers provoke and accuse one another and keep calling on the sky and the earth as witnesses. They usually begin by repeating a large part of the preceding speech to refresh the audience's memory. Between speeches there are more round dances to the music of martial instruments, and the act ends with the

sacrifice of Queché Achí on the altar of the god of conquerors.

Obviously, neither the form nor the theme bears any similarity to the medieval theater brought to America by the missionaries, and still less to the more complex dramas that came later. On the contrary, the repeated use of allegory, the elemental nature of the script, the strange and primitive flavor of the characters, the profusion of interjections and epithets, the frequent references to native customs, especially that of human sacrifice, point clearly to a pre-Hispanic origin.

In Yucatán, too, the Spaniards found a firmly established theater. Describing the famous ruins of Chichén Itzá in his "Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán," Fray Diego de Landa notes that in front of one of the main buildings there were "two small, tiled platforms with four staircases, on which farces and comedies are said to have been presented for the enjoyment of the people." Coming back to the colonial period, Fray Landa reports: "The Indians have very gay amusements, mostly farces, which they perform with much wit; they even hire themselves out to Spaniards just to hear the jokes the Spanish ladies exchange with their maids, their husbands, or one another on the good or bad service; later they artfully present these jokes as Spanish curiosities."

Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar, another chronicler, confirms all this and adds further details in his "Informe contra Idolorum Cultores del Obispado de Yucatán" (Report on Idolatry in the Bishopric of Yucatán): "They had and still have players who dramatize old fables and stories. They address extremely clever jests and mottoes to elders and judges who are too harsh, too easy-going, or too ambitious. . . . The missionaries prohibited these farces . . . either because they glorified ancient customs that were incomprehensible to them or because they were performed at night and might therefore lead to sin. . . . The actors are called *balzam*, and, metaphorically, anyone who is funny, witty, and clownish is also called *balzam*."

So much for drama among the Mayas and Aztecs. Let's take a look at theatrical activities in the vast domain of the Incas, Sons of the Sun. What we know of this subject is based largely on the descriptions of the *taquis* (from the Quechua *taki*—song or chant).

"They say there was a large theater in the middle of the plaza," writes Pedro Cieza de León in his "Segunda Parte de la Crónica del Perú," "with tiered seats and lavishly decorated with feather tapestries full of gold beads and with luxurious blankets made of fine wool and sprinkled with silver, gold, and precious stones. On top of the platform they placed the figure of *Ticiviracocha* . . . and the Inca, the nobles, and the common people came to bow before it."

Father José de Acosta gives us a firsthand account in his "Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias": "I saw in Peru . . . a thousand different dances in which the performers imitated different tradesmen, such as shepherds, farmers, fishermen, and hunters; the music and steps of most of these were slow and deliberate. In other dances the participants were masked . . . and the masks and their grimaces were extremely devilish. Some men danced on the shoulders of others. . . . These dances were largely an expression of superstition and idolatry, because it was through them that the Indians venerated their idols and burial places. . . ." Apparently the brilliant empire of the Incas had already fallen, and what Padre Acosta witnessed was the exuberant popular dances that survived. Despite the inaccuracy and confusion of the description, it clearly shows the dances' imitative and evocative qualities, elements that are found in every embryonic theater.

Better informed chroniclers than Father Acosta tell of more highly developed and complex dramas.



Felipe Huamán Poma de Ayala tells us in his curious "El Primer Nueva Cronica y Buen Gobierno" that "there were buffoons who were called *sanca-rimac* and *cocho-rimac*. These were Indians of Huancavilca. There were also players called *llama llama hayachuco* who were uncivilized Indians of the jungles; the *sanca-chicoe aciechicoe poquiscolla millmarini* took part in farces and fiestas." The famous jurist Juan Polo de Ondegardo points out in his "Informaciones acerca de la Religión y Gobierno de los Incas" that the Inca feast of Intiraymi and the European one of Corpus Christi "have certain points of similarity . . . in the dances, plays, and songs."

Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui, in honor of his triumph over the enemies of the empire, "arranged for great fiestas and plays on the life of each Inca emperor," according to Captain Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa. "These fiestas, which were called *purucaya*, lasted more than four months. He made lavish sacrifices to each Inca after the portrayal of his life." The captain adds that on entering Cuzco in triumph "the soldiers, grouped in squadrons, re-enacted the victories and battles they were celebrating."

Once when Huáscar was in the plaza of Pomapampa surrounded by his officers and a large crowd, we are informed by the mestizo historian Juan Santa Cruz Pachacuti, he ordered that a hundred Indians come out and stage "their comedies."

Garcilaso de la Vega, looking back on his boyhood through the mists of nostalgia and distance, wrote in his imperishable "Comentarios reales": "The sages and philosophers did not lack skill in composing comedies and tragedies, which on special occasions were presented before the kings and courtiers. The players were not from the rank and file, but Incas and nobles, governors and sons of governors, and high-ranking military men, because the heroes of the tragedies always played themselves; the plots were always entered on military exploits, on triumphs and victories, on the feats and glories of past kings and other heroic leaders. The comedy plots were based on agricultural, financial, and domestic subjects. After the performance the actors took their places according to their rank and duties. There were no indecent or vulgar shows: all were on proper subjects, with acceptable lines and witticisms. Generous gifts and favors were bestowed on the outstanding actors."

Just what were these performances like? The reader should remember that the chroniclers' use of the words "tragedy" and "comedy" was similar but not identical to the way they are used today. And other words had completely different meanings; "sheep of the land," for example, were not sheep but llamas, and the "rabbits of the Indies" were not rabbits but guinea pigs. The accounts of Sarmiento de Gamboa, Santa Cruz Pachacuti, and Garcilaso de la Vega indicate that the shows described were part of an official theater with political functions. They were staged with the pomp and ceremony befitting the high social rank of the cast, and were nearly always given in the presence of priests, virgins of the sun, and warriors. Thus, as Garcilaso points out, there were no "indecent or vulgar shows." Their purpose was to impress the people, in a visual and lively way, with the glory and majesty of their kings and the decadence and downfall of their enemies. In theme and method they can be compared to the tragedies of Aeschylus, which were essentially a series of chronicles interpreted by a chorus. The Incas' dramas were impressive dramatic tributes, a combination of historic ballads and scenic pageants, real epic poems adapted for the theater.

Descriptions of pre-Columbian productions are scarce, and many that do exist are distorted by observers who considered them contemptible products of idolatrous and barbarian minds. However, as we have

seen, there is enough evidence to establish the fact that pre-Hispanic America had an unwritten theatrical tradition, complete with skilled actors, adequate stages and stage settings, and a wide variety of themes and forms. Like any firmly rooted theater, it had considerable social importance both as a means of recreation and as an instrument for correcting customs, strengthening religious beliefs, and spreading news of important national events.

That unwritten American theater, interrupted by the invasion of an antagonistic and conquering culture, could not continue its natural development to full maturity. But although the tree was broken off the trunk remained. During the sixteenth century the Christian missionaries took advantage of the native theatrical tradition to spread the dogmas and doctrines of the new religion among the masses of neophytes. It was a case of transculturation. When European religious plays were translated into the Indian tongues and performed by the converts themselves, the gospel took form in American flesh and its ideas were blended with the gestures and inflections of the native actors; they used their ancient dramatic skills to appeal directly to the minds or the emotions of the audience. The missionary theater was, therefore, more than a simple case of transplanting; it was a grafting of European subjects onto the trunk of the American theater. Scattered results of this grafting, now a part of folklore, can still be found today from Texas and New Mexico in the United States to the southern tip of the continent. For example, there are the *pastorales* (folk plays telling the story of the shepherds), which are performed at Christmas time in Mexico, Central America, and the southwestern United States; "Los Montezumas" in Panama; and certain traditional celebrations in northern Argentina, described by Bernardo Canal Feijoo in his "La Expresión Popular Dramática."

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The merry farces Durán described in such detail also lived on in later eras. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a musical comedy known as *El Güegüence* (from *huehue*, meaning "old," and *tze*, a suffix of respect or affection) was still being performed by the Mangués Indians of Nicaragua in a mixed Spanish and Indian dialect. This comedy-ballet actually dates from the middle of the colonial period, but its humor, based on a character who pretends to be deaf in order to amuse the public with his confusion, is the same as that found in some of the pre-Hispanic farces. The nature of the music, the periodic interruption of the action by dances, and the use of repeated phrases, as in the Rabinal Achí, for an entrance cue or a memory aid, all point to its native origin and give the performance ethnographic as well as dramatic significance.

Rooted in those impressive dramatic tributes that were staged in the court of the Sons of the Sun is one of the most discussed and most translated dramas of America: the Quechua *Ollantay*, first presented in Cuzco in 1780 before the rebellious leader Túpac Amaru. That work is not purely pre-Columbian, as some eager Americanists claim, but a combination of two schools—the theater of Spain's Golden Age and the ancient tradition that had come down, more or less surreptitiously, from the Inca empire. In structure it imitates the comedies of the Golden Age (the division into three acts, the use of certain types of stanzas, the inclusion of a jester), but all the rest is Indian: the plot, which recalls the best days of the empire; the authentic Inca melodies, lyrical and melancholy; the dialect, which is that of Cuzco and its environs; and even the purpose itself, saturated as it is with political angles.

Continued on page 49

# Patterns of an Old City

## A VERY NICE PARTY

By Howard S. Phillips

**H**ER EYES, as always when they attended social gatherings, covertly yet closely followed his movements in the crowd. Like an adroit nursemaid who sitting in a park-bench and without looking can be knitting or reading and at the same time watch after the child in her care, she could sustain conversations, mingle with people, appear sociable and gay, and yet, through desultory fleeting glimpses or the sound of his voice, never completely lose sight of him.

And though this watchfulness spoiled much of her fun and she was loath to admit it to herself, she knew that it was altogether necessary; that she could never fully trust Lloyd at a party where drinks were abundant, and especially at a house such as this, that was provided with a well stocked and well attended bar. Hence she preferred to move about as far as it was possible, to talk standing or sitting lightly on an arm of a chair, and not to pause too long with anyone. She knew that she had to keep her eye on Lloyd, particularly after the party had reached a certain perilous point, a subtle and decisive point of either satiety or excess: the perilous and trying moment when she usually had to forego mere watchfulness and begin to persuade him that it was time to go home.

She had learned through repeated painful experience that his docility or recalcitrance depended upon her lucky divination of the precise moment, that her persuasion was futile if it was precipitated or if she waited a moment too long. There was, unfortunately, no way of ascertaining this moment, for it was never accurately revealed in Lloyd's conduct. A meager conversationalist by nature, he seldom grew verbose or vociferous under the stimulus of drink; though she learned that usually by the time when he had had all he could carry his scant conversation lapsed into a resentful and truculent silence. But by the time he slunk into this inhospitable solitude it was usually too late for reasoning. Suddenly he was possessed by an overpowering need to reject, to repel, to defy, loudly, revilingly; his obstinacy became a challenge, a belligerent grievance; he was beyond reasoning and could be coped with only by physical force. Hence the parties they had attended had as often as not terminated with ugly and deeply mortifying scenes, and hence, also, the invitations they received became progressively more scarce as time went on.

These were the uneasy thoughts she sought to conceal under an apparently jovial and unpreoccupied mien as she chatted with this or that person, properly distributing her casual amiability among all the guests, avoiding to slight anyone, in keeping with the correct and cordial manner she had acquired during the many years when she herself had been privileged to often play the part of convivial hostess. But that, she wistfully thought, had been a rather long time ago.

She could not deny to herself, whenever she thought of such things, that it had been pleasant and easy with Hubert, that for all his limitations, and even during the final infelicitous years when they were gradually falling apart he preserved the poise of an excellent host. Even during the years she had lived alone she managed to overcome the handicaps of a divorcee and to maintain her social standing. But all that seemed to her now irretrievably lost in a past, a remote past that was dead, unlamented, and almost forgotten.

When she and Hubert parted a portion of her life came to an end, definitely, irrevocably; it was something that had to happen, that was fully unavoidable. It was the normal death of something that had been outlived, of something that was intrinsically dead.

And yet their separation surprised and baffled their friends. There was no apparent reason for it. Their marriage, in fact, was of the kind people would likely regard as utterly stable, secure and unmenaced. They were comfortably well off, and they lived in a pleasant, tastefully furnished house in Colonia del Valle. They were a jovial and hospitable couple whose friendliness apparently stemmed from genuine contentment, from a normal, orderly and in every way quite satisfactory scheme of existence, an abundant state of well-being which they were eager to share with their friends. They reared two quite attractive children, and seemed to have reached the so often hazardous period of middle age in perfect harmony, without growing away from each other, without losing mutual affinities or a common concern and purpose in life.

Their friends, of course, had failed to perceive that their jovial hospitality which endured to the end was a pathetic disguise of frustration, a flight from an acute and chronic boredom, from an emotional sterility, from a vacuum wherein they were inextricably lost, an escape from a solitude which was rendered more desolate and deep by each other's presence.

Thus their parting had been a total severance. Hubert completely went out of her way. He liquidated his business and departed from Mexico, and she was left alone to freely rearrange her life. There had been no scandal, no unsavoury details, no intrusion of a third party. It was simply the dissolution of a partnership that had grown untenable. Everything had been arranged amicably. There was no contention over property or money. She was left with the house in Colonia del Valle and with a quite adequate income from real estate. Their children, moreover, had not provided an obstacle, for their daughter was married and living in Boston, while their son was in the final year at college. They were grown and self-sufficient. They did not need her any more. She had fulfilled her role as mother, and now she had only herself to look after, only her own future to think about.

At the beginning she was buoyed by a feeling of release, of independence, of a new freedom and anticipation. She felt as if she had emerged from a protracted bondage of inertia and indecision and was actually commencing a new life. She rented the house and moved to an ample, neatly appointed apartment in the vicinity of Chapultepec Park. She did not withdraw to herself. She preserved associations with former friends, endeavoured to guard her equanimity and to conduct herself naturally, without constraint or self-consciousness. Life, her attitude seemed to imply, was like that, and a divorce was nothing to make a fuss over.

She had always been moderately active in community affairs, and now she devoted more time to them. She took a leading part in charity drives or the promotion of cultural projects. She sought as far as it was possible to keep busy and interested, to avoid being left by herself, to avoid idleness or solitude which brought on disturbing introspection. A middle-aged woman, she repeatedly said to herself, can be left alone in the world, and yet remain useful and active; she can yet guard a place and a purpose in life.

Continued on page 44



## Corners in Antiquity

By Hudson Strode

**A**FTEH the Maya temples in Yucatán and Chiapas and the Toltec pyramids of Teotihuacán, the most impressive ruins in Mexico are those of Mitla, some twenty-five miles southeast of Oaxaca. Three businessmen and a hired a car for the trip.

Six miles from Oaxaca on the road to the templed fortress we stopped at the village called Santa María del Tule to see one of the wonders of the world. In a corner of the churchyard of Saint Mary of the Bulrushes stands a gigantic cypress tree estimated to be some fifteen hundred years old. It reaches to a height of a hundred and sixty-five feet, and from the base its circumference measures a hundred and sixty feet. Cortés and most of his troops rested under its spreading shade on their ill-fated journey to Honduras. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Baron von Humboldt came to pay his respects to this venerable organic monument, and he carved his immortal name in the gray-green bark. Today a printed sign warns the tourist not to do likewise. Where the great naturalist honored the tree, the incision of a lesser name would profane it. Almost a hundred persons with backs to the bole and shoulder to shoulder could encircle the tree like a broad-banded finger ring. Cottages might be erected under the branches, with their spread of a hundred and forty feet. Lovers could hide themselves from the world's eye in the mossy dells between the swollen roots. That morning, tots under school age were using it for a playhouse, clambering up and down the root ridges with innocent intimacy, unimpressed by the fabulous quality of something that had been like a cradle to them and their ancestors.

In the little village three manifestations of modernity had sprung up within sight of the great antiquity.

One was the terminus of a streetcar line within fifty yards of the tree. The other two were a federal school and co-operative mill for grinding corn. Across the dusty empty space as large as that of the green plaza of Oaxaca, an electric mill was doing work in three minutes that would have taken a woman three days to do. A line of some forty girls and women with wide fat baskets on their heads and deep tall baskets in their hands were lined up, waiting their turn to have the corn kernels crushed into meal. It was a nice composition for an artist. The short part of the line was in the crude stucco portico, the longer hind part stretched out into the white sunlight, which made brilliant the blues and reds of the women's full cotton skirts and the variegated dyes of their baskets.

The mill was operated only one day a week, but it was enough to grind the corn for the entire region's tortillas. The words Molino Cooperativo were painted in simple letters across the front of the low white building. Here was a leap of centuries out of the primitive ways. Until literally only yesterday, and as far back in the decipherable records as mankind in Mexico went, the females of the species had endured a laborious process in preparing the raw corn. They had boiled it in lime to make the husk easy to remove and then ground it by hand with a stone pestle in a stone bowl. It was the woman's lot to spend a goodly part of every day squatting over the implements for corn-grinding. The larger her brood of offspring, the more arduous her task, until the older girls were big enough to help with the work. But now, even in remote districts, girls were going to school until they were twelve years old, and they could not be as much help to the mothers as they were before the Government decided to make the Indians literate. So a co-operative



mill, in which all the peasants held shares, was almost necessary after the federal school next door came to take up the children's time. One manifestation of civilization brings on another.

"El Arbol del Tule" has seen more changes in the ways of men within the last decade than in all its twenty-five centuries of continuous living. But the humankind who still take siestas on the cool couches of its bark alcoves still cling to many old ways. Though the household meal is ground in the new electrical manner, the tortillas are cooked over a fire on a flat sheet of metal in the shape of flat pancakes, just as they were long before the first white man observed the process.

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In the corn-colored one-room Escuela Federal, a host of black-eyed urchins were being taught to read and write. There would be little danger in the future that some Juárez might miss greatness by lack of literacy. The children were being taught the meaning of patriotism too, and as we entered the building they were piping a hymn to their fatherland. At the conclusion of the singing they did a march, faintly like the conga, with their right foot stamping the rhythmic punctuation of a savage drumbeat. As they passed a Mexican flag stuck in a hole in the floor, they jerked their hands in angular salutes. Some of the kids were as grim-jawed as strikers on picket, but others wore the impish expression of monkeys and grinned at us slyly, as if to say, "Education is diverting in its way, but not to be taken seriously."

The teacher in charge, a short middle-aged man of good physique and earnest heart, took his job as if he had been a missionary called by God. There were lines of worry and perplexity between his eyes, as if it were not easy to instill diligence in the pursuit of learning into his charges. His assistant, too, seemed a bit perplexed. She was a skinny, milk-white girl with fluffy gold hair and pale-blue eyes. She was dressed in unadorned black cotton, the skirt so short that her knees were showing, as well as inch-wide runs in her black-cotton hose. (The salaries of teachers, I knew, were sometimes less than twenty dollars a month in some small places.) She stood looking like an anemic angel fagged by her journey to earth, but singing hosannas shrilly with the dark-skinned imps to make them feel she was at one with them.

As we made out adieu and thanked the principal for his courtesy in permitting the interruption, I asked him about his vacation. His answer was simple. Times were hard, good jobs were scarce, he was fond of children, and he had himself completed the sixth grade of school—so he had become a teacher. He smiled and made a deprecating gesture toward his assembled charges. "You see, though I often feel inadequate, señor, it is hardly necessary to hold a degree from the university to instruct these little ones."

The line of patient women bearing baskets had shortened. Those whose corn had been turned into warm spicy-smelling meal were walking away fast in every direction to prepare the midday meal. We drank some unchilled bottled beer at a place near the church and went on our journey to the temples. The way lay along fields of alfalfa and corn, and through three Zapotec villages. This was all Indian country, and the inhabitants had the quiet assurance of Indians. It was only in the revolutions that they lost it. And here in this pleasant valley there were always ripened fruits to be picked direct from the trees to sweeten the bitterness of life.

The ruins lie on an eminence beyond the village of San Pablo Mitla, whose mud houses are hidden behind fences of organ cactus, wild figs and oleanders.

Strangely, after the green valley, the site around the ruins is nothing but sun-parched earth, bare flanks of hills, and a stinging stream devoid of shade. The sun glares upon a sand-colored monotone, where in a past age these four ruined palaces were the center of an advanced culture. The ruins are remarkable for the stone mosaic work, the arabesques and geometric designs, and the monolithic pillars of porphyry, three feet in diameter, without capital or pedestal, which once supported palace roofs. The deep-red color of some of the inner walls still remains. Beneath the palace, reached by narrow stone stairs with unduly high risers, are the tombs. With lighted tapers in hand we descended into the narrow subterranean passages that once sepulchered the high in estate. The businessman from Boston, who had studied engineering, was mightily impressed with all that had been accomplished without metallic tools.

What a contrast this represented in the degree of culture the Zapotecs had reached, as compared to that of Indians of the islands in the Gulf that Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci first beheld. Early in the sixteenth century Johannes Schöner had written in "Luculentissima descriptio" in Latin as follows: "In America are wild and savage men of handsome stature... People of both masculine and feminine sex go about not otherwise than as their mothers bore them... They lack iron and other metals... They have no king, but live in their liberty... they observe no law, nor have in their marriages any legitimate compact of the bed; their life is therefore entirely voluptuous... They make no sacrifices, nor have they a place or a house in which to make speeches."

Men that built palaces like this did not go about naked, and certainly they had rulers, for only those of the high category had lived within these well-constructed walls. They must have observed strict and ceremonious laws. And from numerous courtyard terraces, as well as within the larger walls, they could have made speeches to multitudes. These folk of Mitla were not as simple as Rousseau's noble savages or the free wild men of Johannes Schöner. There must have been austerity in the character of the breed of men who created Mitla. The ordered geometric beauty could not have been executed by a people who lived an entirely voluptuous life, or who had been devitalized by self-indulgence.

But except for the beautiful patterns of the mosaic work, I did not care much for Mitla. I could get little feeling of life ever having been lived here, whereas in Chichen Itzá and Uxmal every turn of a corner is stirring to the imagination. Ghosts come in troops at Chichen Itzá, but here not a ghost could I call up, at least not in the middle of a July day. The hot suns of centuries had preserved the ruins so that they are still in as good a state of preservation as when the conquistadors came first upon them. But direct sunshine is not flattering to Mitla. The scene cries out for a softening of moonlight. I resolved if I ever came to Mitla again it would be by the light of the moon.

### THE SIURUP SERVANT

A gentleman to whom I had a letter of introduction came to call and drove us out to the ruins of Monte Albán. Señor C.'s family had lived for many generations in the state of Oaxaca. Before the Revolution they had been well-to-do, and both he and his brother had been educated at the University of Wisconsin. He was as knowledgeable as he was stimulating in conversation, but he knew little more about the mystery of Monte Albán than the guidebooks.



The ruins have a splendid situation on top of a hill, with the best view you can obtain of the Valley of Oaxaca unless you take to the air. Beauty lies all about the citadel, but the ruins themselves—great earthen mounds out of which emerge partially pyramids, surrounding a vast courtyard—hold little more than hints of former splendor. Various civilizations have passed here. Archaeologists set 500 B.C. as perhaps the earliest date of the foundations. The chief value of Monte Albán lies in the subterranean tombs. Only in 1931 did the famous archaeologist Dr. Alfonso Caso of the National University make his rich discovery. In Tomb No. 7 he unearthed the bones of nine Mixtec priests or nobles who had tried to take their wealth with them on their migration into the mysterious world beyond. Besides the funeral urns, there was jewelry of exquisite workmanship, which we were to see later in the glass cases of the museum. Other tombs were opened in 1937 and 1938 and more treasure brought up into the light.

The guard allowed us to descend into a now empty tomb, where the walls had retained the freshness of its bright-colored frescoes to a remarkable degree. Then we climbed the northern pyramid's great staircase, which is one hundred and fifty feet wide, to the top of the eighty-feet-high platform. There we stood looking down among the ruins and out over the verdant valley to the encircling mountains. The Mixtecs had chosen well the site for their temple. Both for protection and for scenic view, the position was superlative. Standing at the edge of the platform and letting my eyes roam the cyclorama, I thought of Spengler's definition of "home" for classical man: "Home for him was what he could see from the citadel of his native town, and no more. All that lay beyond the visual range of this political atom was alien, and hostile to boot; beyond that narrow range, fear set in at once, and hence the appalling bitterness with which these petty towns strove to destroy one another." The Mixtecs of Monte Albán had fought the Zapotecs of Mitla for centuries. Then, long after the templed cities of both lay in ruins, they had joined forces again to fight the common enemy, the Aztec. Afterward they became leagued together against the white man. Today they mingle amicably on the streets of Oaxaca, and they quarrel neither more nor less than do men of one family.

We came down one high step and sat leaning against the top stone riser. Though our host had a thousand times remarked his native land from the height of Monte Albán, he too sat without speaking.

Myers broke the silence gently with a verse from the poet Jeffers, who had found small satisfaction in his contacts with his fellows.

"The beauty of things was born before eyes and sufficient to itself: the heart-breaking beauty

Will remain when there is no heart to break for it."

After a pause, our Mexican friend pointed down toward the courtyard within the four pyramids. "My boyish heart was broken right there," he said, with a reminiscent grin.

When a boy our host had come here with his brother to meet other yearling conspirators and plan a revolution of their own while Pancho Villa and Carranza were sweeping down from the north toward Mexico City.

"Many boys of the upper classes were as revolutionary as they come," he said. "We often met in secret with the peon youths. We were to take over our fathers' haciendas, and the peons were to live with us like brothers—though, of course, somehow, we were to be jefes. The thought of surprising Uncle Claude with blazing guns on the next hacienda, and running him off his own property, gave us a thrill.

We could hardly wait to scare the daylights out of our Aunt Juliana, who was stingy with dices. We would march upon her—she was a widow and defenseless, except for her twenty-odd servants—and force her to prepare the very best sweets, with plenty of fruit and sugar, and enough for a whole army of kids.

"With our Christmas money we bought some sombreros almost as big as Zapata's. We were very proud of those hats. On special nights, we would slip out after the family had gone to bed and hold meetings with other young sons of hacendados. They would gather together their peon playmates, and we would make plans for assault and attack and for distribution of land. Our parents could not understand why we were sleepy and listless the next day. They called in the doctor to prescribe tonics. The peons would beat their sons, who dropped asleep at their tasks.

"One night, just before we were to launch our concerted assault on our relatives in the name of liberty and freedom, we held a meeting here. There was a half-moon, and we were full of solemnity and importance as we discussed strategy. Then, in our midst, Pablo Pacheco, our father's stirrup servant, our idol and devoted friend, suddenly, almost as if by magic, appeared.

"Though we did not know it, Pablo had had an eye on us for some weeks. But as if nothing were amiss, he had gone on training us in marksmanship and riding. He had been like a nurse and a tutor to my brother and me, and we thought him the most wonderful fellow in the world. However, we had not dared to take him into our confidence, because we feared his loyalty to our father would come before everything else with him. He had let us go on with our conspiracies and said nothing, amused to see how we would go. Then he proved perfidious and broke our hearts. That night when he appeared here, he pretended to be revolucionario too. He himself would lead the gallant band of muchachos, defenders of liberty. He flattered us like puppies and said in time we might become the most fierce and famous fighters in the Revolution. In these days, boys in the north, he said, were rising to be high officers in no time. We might all get to be generals.

"Turning to the peasant boys, he asked had not Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata been the poorest of peons and were they not now the most famous soldiers in Mexico? The thought made them wild with anticipation. One peon youngster began to speak of cutting out our father's tripe and feeding it to his favorite pig. The announcement sobered us somewhat, and started an argument. Pablo stopped it adroitly. He picked up a goat's horn from the ground and flipped it into the air to catch our attention. Then he set it at some paces on a mound, and casually drawing out his shining pistol, he shattered the horn in the pale moonlight. The word of a man who could shoot like that was more than law. When he said, 'Let's get some sleep now and meet tomorrow at midnight,' we followed him down the hill as if he were the Pied Piper. He put the others on the roads that led to their states, and marched us home, singing to us softly in his magnificent baritone voice.

"We slept until noon the next day, and when we awoke we were greeted with astounding news. We were leaving that very afternoon for Vera Cruz to take the boat for New Orleans. Our father was sending us to boarding school in the States. He said it looked as if Mexico was in for a desperate time. It was safer to have children out of the country. Our trunks had already been packed while we dreamed of conquest.

"We were too flabbergasted to protest. But it

Continued on page 51



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By Doris Rosenthal.

# Cheran: A Village of Mexico

By Ralph L. Beals

**M**ANY persons in Cherán make their own clothes, but a number of persons make clothes for sale or on order. Even men may make clothes for sale if the family owns a sewing machine. For example, one storekeeper makes men's cotton trousers (calzones) and men's shirts in his spare time, selling them in the store. His wife also sews but less frequently. Many storekeepers have one or more sewing machines—the largest number observed was three—which are rented to women who come to the store to sew. One ambitious family (whose sons were sent to Morelia to school) made much of the family income from the labor of mother and daughters. Most of the sewing is durable but not skilled. No one in the town knows how to fit a garment, and as standards approach those of the Mestizos, more and more people buy ready-made garments from outside in stores, markets, or in Mestizo towns.

Most of the "tailors" are specialists, making only one type of garment. One woman makes only men's cotton trousers. She makes six pairs a day, double-stitched. Garments for weddings are single-stitched. The cloth is provided and cut by the customer. This woman works only intermittently on order. One woman makes only aprons, while another makes only children's garments.

Influence of the Mestizo world is strongly evident in men's dress. Yet, aside from the priest, no resident of the town dresses completely catrin (i.e., in city style) in Cherán, and only rarely do individuals going to Uruapan or some other town wear city dress. Many men, it is true, commonly wear one or more garments of "town" style. Coats, sweaters, and jackets are owned by many. Tailored woolen trousers, on the other hand, are rare, while none own complete suits. Ordinarily, the cotton trousers of the Mestizo countryman rather than woolen trousers replace the white calzones of the Indian.

The most prominent and significant change in men's dress in Cherán is not the entry of the catrin garments of storekeeper and professional man of the towns, but of the blue denim jeans or overall of the mechanic and factory workers, the garment of the

proletariat. As the controlling group in town is allied to the Partido Revolucionario Mexicano and the Confederacion de Trabajadores Mexicanos, the town officials, including mayor and secretary, often wear overalls, reserving their catrin clothes for visits to Uruapan or Morelia or for important civic events.

The working dress of Cherán males, and the exclusive dress of many, is trousers (calzones), shirt or blouse of unbleached muslin (manta), straw hat, and sandals (guaraches). A blanket or poncho (serape) is worn or carried as protection against cold or rain.

The calzones or trousers are tight-fitting in the legs but cut full at the waist with a baggy seat. There are no buttons on the fly; instead of a fastening, the two ample sides of the fly are lapped over each other, and a sash, about 6 inches in width, is wrapped about the waist to hold the trousers. The lower part of the trouser leg has a piece of cloth tape attached which is used to tie the bottom of the calzones tightly around the ankle. The shirt, or more properly, blouse, likewise has no buttons. It usually has no tails, or very abbreviated ones, and is usually worn outside the calzones. It is open part way down the front and has a roll collar, but neither opening nor collar ordinarily is fastened. Buttons are never used, except in attempts to copy city garments, but strings may be provided. Such fitting as is attempted is badly done. A coat of manta may also be worn on special occasions; it differs from the blouse primarily in being open down the front and in being of heavier material.

Both shirt and coat may be modified by attempt to copy urban models and sometimes are purchased ready-made.

Sandals or guaraches have a heavy pointed double thick leather sole and leather heel. Part of the top is of leather pieces nailed to the sole, but the major portion is made of woven leather strips passing through slits in the upper sole and the nailed portions of the uppers. The toe is open. As the manufacture of guaraches is practiced by only a few Cherán residents, most of them recent arrivals, no detailed description of techniques is given.

An inseparable part of the costume is the straw hat. From infancy, every male is equipped with a hat, which he always wears outdoors, no matter how inconvenient the circumstances. Awkward jobs, such as carrying heavy timbers, are infinitely delayed because every time a man's hat falls off, the entire operation stops until the hat is replaced. Moreover, the first way in which a man makes an extra "luxury" expenditure in clothing is to buy a more expensive hat. The hat is frequently embellished by bright-colored string about the front of the crown and, passing through two holes at each side, then going around the back of the head. Flowers also are often worn on the hat.

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From the above-described working costume, many departures occur. Without achieving catrin styles, a gay and well-dressed man may wear a brilliant rayon blouse or shirt of blue, red, or yellow, and bright-yellow high shoes (the latter without socks). A brilliant rayon kerchief may be added, as well as a colorful serape or poncho, although in Cherán the latter is usually dull in color. In such a town as Capacuaro, however, Sunday or fiesta dress might consist of calzones of manta supported by a brilliant red sash, a vivid blue rayon shirt, bright green rayon kerchief, yellow shoes, a striking orange or strong pink poncho folded over one shoulder, and a large whitened straw hat with a big spray of pink gladiolus or a cluster of geraniums. Worn with an air, the ensemble is impressive.

In Cherán a good many men have shirts bought in the market or in Uruapan; a necktie; a pair or two of cotton trousers, perhaps made by a tailor in Uruapan; a woolen sack coat; and a felt hat. Such a costume normally would be worn on Sunday or on trips by bus to Uruapan or some other town. Very rare, though, are individuals with a complete wool suit. Sweaters are fairly common for lounging about home or on the streets.

The dress of male children is similar to that of adults as soon as they have learned to walk and have established habits of toilet control. However, it is said that small boys formerly wore only a shirt; calzones for the young became common with the advent of the highway. Young boys, including even infants in arms, have hats, but until the age of 10 or 12 these are cheap woven straw hats costing 15 to 25 centavos rather than the more expensive sewn braid hats worn by men. The acquisition of an adult hat and a poncho is the principal recognition of adulthood.

Today both men and boys wear the hair short, cut either at home or by a barber. Only one boy in Cherán was observed with long hair; his mother was not a native. Still remembered, however, is the belief that to use of scissors or a knife to cut hair will retard small children in learning to speak. Consequently, long hair was formerly common among small children. Although no memory persists in Cherán of long hair worn by men, in other villages it is asserted long hair was worn until a generation ago. Elderly Capacuaro informants insisted they had seen long hair worn by men in San Lorenzo, while an old man in Chilchota, now a Mestizo town, claimed his grand-father wore long hair as did many others of similar age.

Probably the majority of women in Cherán wear cotton print dresses for everyday wear. However, only a few wear the styles found among Mestizo women, that is, a fairly short one-piece, rather simply cut dress of garish cotton print cloth which might be duplicated among cheap cotton house dresses in the United States. Much more common is a garment of archaic cut and usually with smaller, less colorful figures in the

material. This garment is usually longer and has a definite skirt, plicated at the waist-band, and a blouse, although usually the two are combined into a single garment. Flounces or ruffles are not infrequent on the skirt and the back of the waist. This garment, in some of its forms, is not essentially different from that worn by Mixe women, as well as women of other Indian groups, and probably dates back to at least the seventeenth century.

Virtually every woman in town also has a traditional Tarascan dress. This is usually worn for any formal occasion, even though only for visiting or receiving guests, while a great many conservative women wear it constantly. In the latter case, if they can afford it, women have two costumes, an old one for everyday, a newer one for special occasions.

• • •

The complete Tarascan woman's dress consists of petticoat, skirt, blouse, apron, rebozo or shawl, and a number of women belts. The greatest variation is in the blouse. This may be of cheap manta or even discarded flour sacking, in which case it merely has an opening for the head, short sleeves, 4 to 6 inches in length, and is unsewn down the sides. The open-sided blouse is often worn by nursing mothers even though the materials are of better quality. No matter how cheap the materials, however, some design in cross-stitching is usually found about the neck opening.

Finer blouses may be of good cotton, rayon, or even silk, although cotton is the most common. The short sleeves may have a drawstring at the end to tie them closely about the arm. This gives a puffed sleeve appearance, although there is no fitting. More commonly, except in garments made for tourists, the lower end of the sleeve is finished with a crocheted band about 1 inch wide in a contrasting color. Often the lower seam of the sleeve is not carried to the body of the garment. The side seam of the latter is also often incomplete for about 2 inches below the sleeve. The opening left compensates to some extent for the lack of fitting. The neck opening is bound either by solid cross-stitching or a crocheted band similar to that on

Drawing.

By Doris Rosenthal.





the sleeve. An extensive cross-stitched design usually gives the effect of a yoke, although front and back of the blouse are single piece. The neck opening is tied together with two pieces of cord, a piece sewn to each side. Garments for sale may have a drawstring about the neck opening, which then is not extended down the front of the garment.

Cherán women's blouses are usually plainer than those worn in other villages. The decoration is usually a dull yellowish brown and is applied with restraint. No study of the designs was attempted, as it is hoped a general study of the Tarascan textile and garment industry will be made.

The petticoat is of white cotton cloth or manta. It reaches from the waist nearly to the ground, and the lower edge is decorated with a band nearly 2 inches wide of cross-stitched designs in blue, strong pink, or red. These designs are made in Nahuatl on long strips of manta and are purchased and sewn on the lower edge of the petticoat. The garment itself is tubular with a circumference of at least 6 yards. The top edge is folded back a foot or more, giving a double thickness of cloth about the waist. It is worn flat across the front and then skillfully gathered in knife pleats across the back, forming almost a ridge of material across the back. The pleats are not sewn but are laid in place each time the petticoat is donned. The top of the petticoat comes at least 6 inches above the waist. A woven belt of wool, usually in brilliant colors, about 2 inches wide and 2 or more yards long, is then placed very tightly about the waist to support the petticoat. Only training from childhood makes it possible to endure the tightness of the belt constantly.

If Tarascan dress is worn constantly, women frequently wear the petticoat without the skirt and apron while working. This is true even when running errands on the street. Any formal occasion, however, is thought to require the outer skirt and apron.

The outer skirt is of very dark blue or black wool cloth, either of commercial origin, or handloomed materials from Paracho or Nahuatl. Two widths of the latter are required. The skirt is tubular also, and the circumference should equal or exceed that of the petticoat, the limit being the purse of the family and the fortitude of the woman. Skirts over 30 yards in circumference are known; a 15-yard circumference is probably about the minimum for a really stylish garment. The top is folded in, and the surplus material is gathered, as in the petticoat, in knife pleats across the back. The top of the skirt is well above the waist and is held in place by several narrow woven belts of bright colors and designs. Despite their elaborate designs, these belts are wrapped one on top of the other. Although one would suffice, ideally one belt is superimposed on another until they reach a thickness of as much as 2 inches.

The pleats of the skirt must be prepared more carefully than those of the petticoat. When the skirt is washed, two women fold in the pleats while the material is still damp. It is then laid flat to dry or clamped between two or three pairs of sticks which project beyond the sides of the skirt and are tied together. The same device is often used when the skirt is not being worn.

• • •

When both skirt and petticoat are worn, a ridge of cloth extends across the middle of the back large enough for a small child to sit on, held by his mother's shawl. The thickness of cloth is also folded under when a woman sits on the ground, creating a seat quite as high as the low stools or chairs used by men. When walking, the skirt barely clears the ground and only glimpses may be caught of the colored band of the petticoat. In rainy weather or on muddy roads the

skirt becomes wet and muddy. In the Lake Pátzcuaro region, not only is the skirt worn a little shorter, but it is often hitched up nearly to the knees by using one of the many belts to loop up part of the cloth at the back into a bustle-shaped bundle. In the same area, skirts are often of red plaid materials and the upper part is made of lighter materials, making the thickness of the folds at the waist much less.

The rebozo, or shawl, is an inseparable part of the costume. The everyday rebozo, and the only one owned by poor women, is a hand-loomed cotton fabric from Paracho or Nahuatl. The color is dark blue with fine light-blue or white longitudinal stripes. The color is from indigo dye. A tasseled fringe some 4 inches in length finishes the ends.

For special occasions, women who can afford them wear a much finer gray or blue cotton rebozo from Tangancicuaro. Such rebozos may cost from 10 to 60 pesos or more, and the finer specimens can be drawn through a finger ring. An elaborate netted fringe 8 or 10 inches long is waxed to make it stiff. Some fine rebozos have a thin stripe, but the main effect is of a pepper-and-salt mixture.

The rebozo is sometimes worn over the head as a protection against rain, sunshine, or cold, or to hide the face partly if the wearer is embarrassed. At such times a fold may be drawn across the lower part of the face and caught in the teeth. Much of the time, however, the rebozo is worn as a shawl. Children or small objects are slung on the back in a fold of the rebozo. The bare arms are also usually covered by the rebozo. The ends may be used to lift hot objects or as a handkerchief. The rebozo is worn with cotton dresses as well as with the traditional costume.

Women usually go barefooted on all occasions. Today some wear shoes, but no woman was ever seen to wear guaraches. Occasionally women may wear a man's straw hat over the rebozo when traveling in hot sun. Usually, though, a leafy branch is plucked and held to shade the head.

Women dress one another's hair. The hair is carefully combed and brushed, frequently with brushes from urban sources or with brushes of *raiz de paja*. Oil or lemon juice is often rubbed on the hair to impart a sheen and preserve the hairdress for 2 or 3 days. The hair is parted in the middle and then carefully braided in two braids. Young women and some older women braid in pieces of bright-colored yarn or narrow ribbons. Small girls usually have yarn or ribbon only in one braid. Very old women sometimes do not comb the hair, letting it hang in a tangled mass, possibly because they have no relatives or friends to do this. A band or cord may, in this case, be tied around the head to keep the hair out of the face. In Mestizoized Chilchota, women still do not comb their own hair but do it for each other.

Girls frequently are put in the traditional costume before they can walk. Usually a portion of a worn-out skirt or serape is bound on the infant with a belt. When the child can walk, a miniature blouse and petticoat are provided, and usually a portion of a skirt, even though ragged. Thus, even from infancy, the girl is tightly bound about the waist and at an older age is able to stand the tight belt necessary to support the heavy petticoat and skirt.

Both women and girls wear necklaces of tubular red glass beads called *corales* (corals). Three or four to several dozen strings are worn. The strings go only part way around the neck, being attached to two ribbons which are tied behind the neck. Earrings are also worn. Miscellaneous cheap products of the markets may be worn, but the proper type every woman desires is a large hollow crescentic ornament with wires from each end passing through the perforation in the ear. These are of gold or silver, gold being preferred. A gold pair costs about thirty-five dollars.





CORN MARKET. OUI.

By Valetta Swann.

## Valetta Swann

By Guillermo Rivas

**D**URING the twelve years Valetta Swann, an Englishwoman, has been living and working in Mexico she has achieved in her personal art a degree of identification and unison with the life and art of this country hardly equalled by any other foreign artist in my memory. She has found in the milieu of the rural indigenous Mexico—which of the many Mexicos is still the most real—a completely compatible aesthetic homeland, and what she sees and tells is seen and told not by the alien eyes and terms of an outsider but by someone who has become deeply fused with this milieu.

The value of art, beyond the craft it implies, is revealed by its mental and emotional depth. Shallowness or superficiality, even if it is accompanied by excellent craft, cannot produce a work of art. The outer substance of a painting bears significance and veritable beauty only when it is supported by a valid inner substance. And it is this rare combination of valid outer and inner substance that we find in the paintings of Valetta Swann.

She has found in the milieu of rural Mexico a theme for social probing, for human exploration, and in the neo-realism of modern Mexican art a harmonious outlet for a personal utterance. She has discerned in the indigenous scene, in the impervious and invulnerable mass and body of Mexico, the core and the crux

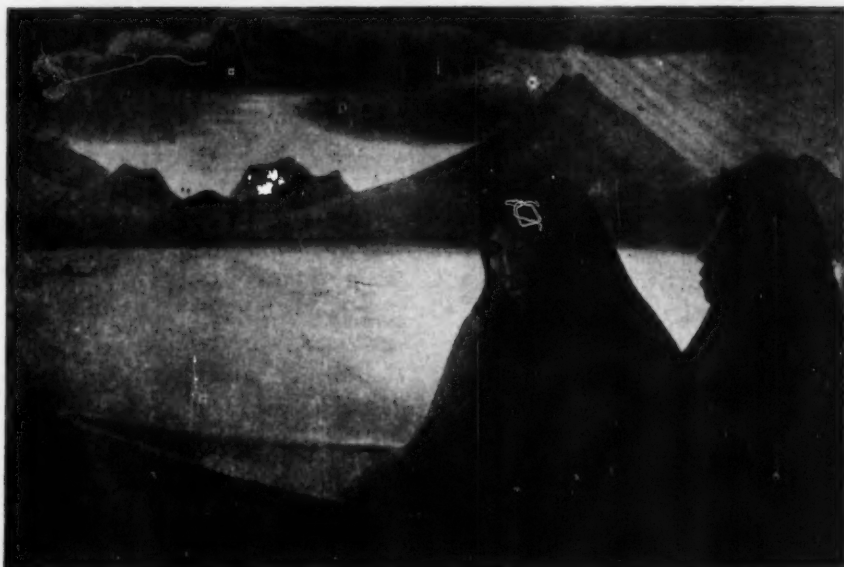
of Mexico's social dilemma, as well as the dramatic and deeply human essence of its life itself. And she has endeavored to interpret this life in the most appropriate terms—those that have been evolved by the great mural masters who brought about in Mexico the resurgence of fresco buono and of monumental art.

In an era of negation, of cosmopolitan rootlessness, of offete and anile daubing, she has found in this modern Mexican phraseology a reassertion of human values, a return to fundamental truths, a means of fusing her life with art, and of thus imbuing it with vitality, of preserving it vibrantly alive.

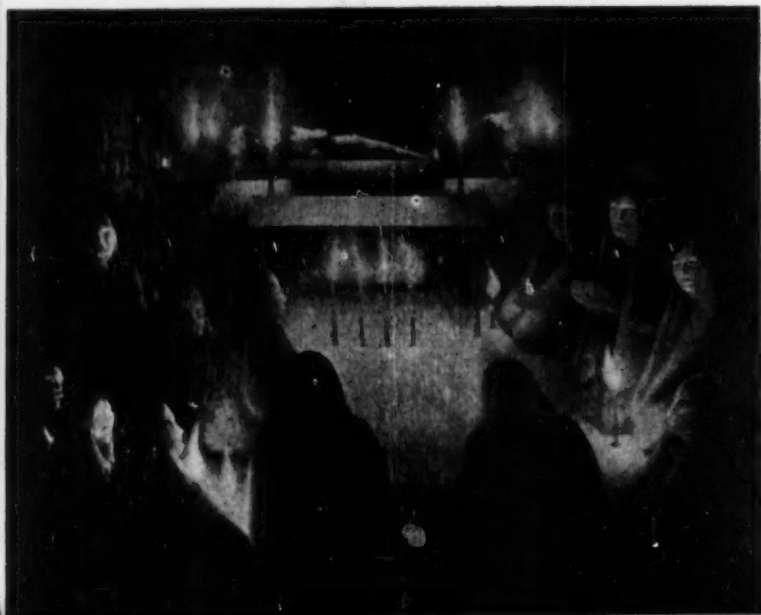
But the adjustment of her art to this phraseology has not defined the mere acquisition of an aesthetic language. Through the acquisition of this language she has actually achieved an authentically personal assertion. Her paintings are always unmistakably her own. They are distinguished for their luminosity, for her singular ability to employ color in such way that shadow and light, interplay in a full gamut of subtle chromatic tonalities, thus rendering the intangibility of light palpable and tangible, thus lending a peculiar living significance to air and space, to all her spatial area. And it is this outer luminosity achieved with paint that brings out the inner luminosity of the depth of her feeling and of the clarity of her thought.



BEGGARS. OIL.  
By Valentin Swann.



SUNSET. OIL.  
By Valentin Swann.



WAKE. OIL.  
By Valentin Swann.

NIGHT MARKET. OIL.  
By Valeria Swann.



PALMS and MATS. OIL.  
By Valeria Swann.

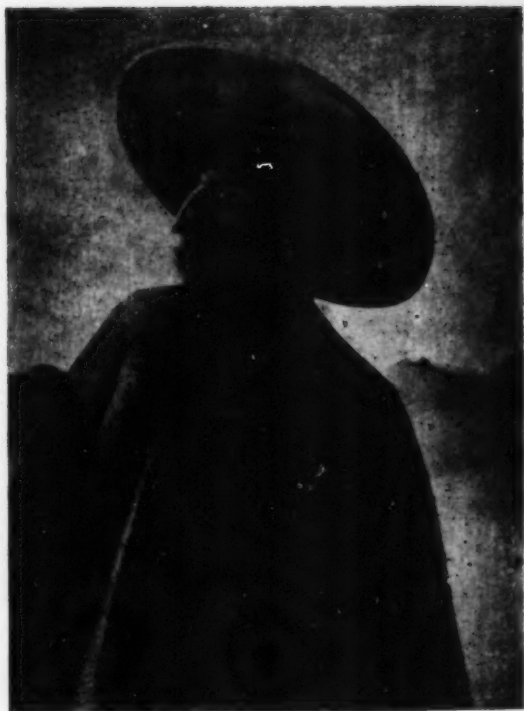
LA MOJIGANGA. OIL.  
By Valeria Swann.





RETURN FROM THE MARKET. OIL.

By Valetta Swann.



EL MATON. OIL.

By Valetta Swann.



AT THE CHURCH DOOR. OIL.  
By Valetta Swann.



# Un Poco de Todo

## UNESCO FINDS WAY HARD IN ITS LABOR FOR PEACE

**S**INCE wars begin in the mind of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed."

This earnest statement begins the preamble to the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to which sixty-eight countries have subscribed since it was set up in London in 1945.

That Governments do not always agree as to how and how fast such defenses should be built was demonstrated during the seventh general conference, held last month. But the statement stands as the keynote of a high-minded organization. Put more fully, the purpose of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science and culture. It goes about fulfilling this purpose in the following general ways:

- (1) Help in advancing mutual knowledge and understanding among peoples.
- (2) Advancement of popular education and spread of culture.
- (3) Maintenance, increase and diffusion of knowledge.

\* \* \*

Among many handicaps UNESCO has to face in carrying out this wide program one in particular almost neutralizes it as an effective organization. This is the total absence of the Soviet Union and its satellites either as members or as participating nations. The Soviet Union has never joined UNESCO. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary are members but have ceased to take any active part in its work. Thus no "defenses of peace" are being built in just those minds that have helped in large part to bring about the present state of conflict in the world. Not only are they closed to UNESCO's influence, but propaganda is daily filling them with the sort of ideas and prejudices it is UNESCO's task to fight. The organization's universality becomes, therefore, more of a wish than a fact.

Within the geographical sphere open to it—and this is considerable, comprising as it does sixty-five nations on all continents—UNESCO has made some substantial contributions.

It has helped overcome currency and customs restrictions on exchange of scientific material and books through its international coupon system; it has begun pilot projects in fundamental education techniques designed to raise standards of living and eradicate illiteracy in backward areas; it has brought out well-written popular studies on race prejudice and collective security and has encouraged studies on causes of international tensions and how to attack them.

In performing these tasks UNESCO runs up against its second major handicap, one that is inherent in almost all international organizations. In large part it can only initiate or suggest. It cannot go very far in implementing. It must depend on the goodwill of member states and their ability to carry out a program on an effective basis.

The nature of UNESCO's fight for peace and of the materials with which it works constitute another handicap. Discussions and decisions are often vague and lost in the clouds of idealism. Consequently, it has

trouble capturing ordinary people's imaginations or holding their interest.

\* \* \*

When an international organization whose essential aim is preserving the peace has no effect upon nations which constitute a danger to that peace, and when, in any case, its work is one whose fruits may not be seen for many years to come, it is apt to have a low priority for those nations bearing the heaviest financial burden of maintaining democratic traditions in the world. It is therefore not unnatural to find the United States, Britain and her Dominions calling for strict economy in UNESCO's program and formulation of projects calculated to give the most effective results for money spent.

An inevitable conflict arising out of this attitude had explosive results a month ago when Director General Jaime Torres Bodet resigned in protest against a cut of almost \$2,500,000 in his proposed budget. For Señor Torres Bodet it was more than a question of money.

He saw in the desire to keep the budget down a sort of abandonment of support for the agency's ideas and aims, an abandonment all the more discouraging since it was being done in favor of a military build-up. To this the "economy bloc" answers that its resources for all its international commitments are not unlimited and some choice has to be made. The view is that rearmament is a most immediate and pressing need, however valuable UNESCO may be.

Somewhat linked to Señor Torres Bodet's view on the budget is his feeling that there have been attempts to turn UNESCO into a political organization, thus depriving it of its character of a political universality. The United States' insistence on a strong UNESCO stand in favor of United Nations action against aggression in Korea is viewed in this light since it would tend to put UNESCO on one side of the East-West conflict.

United States and British bearishness on UNESCO spending has brought them also into sharp conflict with certain of the smaller under-developed countries who contribute relatively little but who hope for certain tangible benefits in the way of technical and educational assistance.

### CONTINENTAL BRIDGE

Africa and South America probably were once joined by a broad land bridge which has since disappeared under the South Atlantic Ocean, says Dr. Kenneth E. Caster, professor of geology and fellow of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Cincinnati. He bases his conclusions on years of intensive study along the eastern coastal areas of South America.

Dr. Caster's views disagree with those of Dr. F. B. Taylor, who decided forty years ago that Africa and South America once constituted a single continent which split, the two parts drifting away from each other. Dr. Caster holds that South America and Africa were always two continents. But by means of a craton bridge—a changeable belt of the earth's crust, sometimes under and sometimes above water—ancient plant and animal life exchanged habitats.

Continued on page 48

# Literary Appraisals

**THE WONDERFUL COUNTRY** By Tom Lea. With drawings by the author. 386 pp. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

**E**VELYN WAUGH has blandly suggested that the literature most typical of present-day culture in the United States is the detective story. Others feel it is the Western. Our abiding devotion to the latter seems to stem from drives nearer the surface and a good deal healthier than those of the devotees of Mickey Spillane and such. Periodically someone tries to lift the level of the Western to literature and a handful of these have come pretty close to success. Tom Lea's book is the latest of these and his try is a good one.

The "wonderful country" is the borderland of west Texas and the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora; the time not long after the Civil War; the people those that populate any Western: good and bad Mexicans, good and bad Indians, good and bad Anglos, a U. S. Cavalry post, border towns, Anglo women simpering or unhappy, Mexican prostitutes, a crusty doctor and a black stallion. All the paraphernalia of the ordinary Western are present. What makes the book an unusual one, then, is less its subject than the way Mr. Lea writes about it and his knowledge of it. But that's the usual difference anyhow between a serious book and a frivolous one.

Mr. Lea knows the country well and writes beautifully of it from love and an identification with it. Perhaps he started out to make the country the protagonist of his book; so the title seems to indicate. But this would break a taboo of long standing and there appears instead a typical American folk-hero. Martin Brady as a boy of 13 killed the man who killed his father, fled to Chihuahua, was raised by a family of peons on one of the big haciendas, became a pistolero for the Castro family which periodically ruled the state and, along with it or in spite of it, grew to be a natural man.

He matures divided between the two countries. When a mission for the Castros and a broken leg stand him on the United States side of the river, a long period of inner turmoil is set off which ends with his return for good to his own land; it is then that he regains an independence of body and spirit he had lost in the feudal Mexican life. It is the story of that turmoil that Mr. Lea tells, frequently with great excitement and always with a wealth of authentic detail that makes the run-of-the-mill Western seem very silly, indeed.

As in "The Brave Bulls" Mr. Lea provides here a host of clear, believable minor characters but fails to make us quite believe in his few major ones. Brady, indeed, represents a device long peculiar to American writers: the sensitive man placed in a material situation the difficulty and duration of which try him almost beyond endurance. In the nature of things this cannot happen very often, if at all, and one questions the reality of Brady as one questioned Odets' "Golden Boy," who could be at once sensitive enough to become a master violinist and insensitive enough to achieve the proportions of a master prizefighter. Occasionally, too, Mr. Lea's discipline fails and he begins to dream of how appropriate Gary Cooper would appear on that black horse. The Negro cavalry sergeant is a solid human being and talks like one but the Texas Rangers too often talk like Boy Scouts. Still, it will be quite a long while before a better novel of its kind appears. Mr. Lea's own extremely skillful black-and-white drawings decorate his book.

H. S.

**BOLIVAR.** By Salvador de Madariaga. Illustrated. 711 pp. New York: Farrar, Rinehart & Co.

**K**NEW Salvador de Madariaga well in the early Nineteen Thirties, when he had closed his diplomatic career and for a brief time was Minister of Education, and for some years the spokesman of Spain in the League of Nations. He had written some brilliant books that were no more sparkling than his conversation. He has since concentrated on South American history, and his "Cortés" and "The Rise and Fall of the Spanish-American Empire in South America" have a permanent place in the libraries of scholars. To these brilliant volumes he now adds a biography of Bolivar.

It differs from most biographies of Bolivar in that it is critical and treats the Bolivar myths without reverence. The worshipers of Bolivar may not like it, but the author's documentation is impressive.

Madariaga's Bolivar is picturesque and powerful, a man of unbounded personal ambition craving a crown and moving toward its realization as ruthlessly as any dictator. He is a man of "machievellian duplicity and unabated ambition."

Bolivar was not a republican but a monarchist. He was so far from demanding an independent continent that he favored the rebuilding of the Spanish empire in South America under a British protectorate, though Madariaga concludes this was intended to plant the thought with the people that a monarchy under Bolivar would be preferable. Bolivar did not think the hoped-for empire in South America could last "unless it tied itself up with England." (He so little understood the significance of the United States that, but for the insistence of Santander, in many ways a greater statesman with broader vision, this country would not have been invited to participate in the Panama Congress.)

Bolivar's monarchial or dictatorial ambition envisioned his empire stretching from Lima to Caracas. Knowing that the people would not have approved his ambition, he pinned his hopes on the army and the feudalistic aristocracy in pursuit of titles. Madariaga finds that the "slightest gesture" toward monarchy would have destroyed his popularity, "the very basis on which he built his ambition." Yet in 1825 Bolivar wrote, "I have a secret idea that I cannot reveal." "His secret idea," says Madariaga, "was—a monarchy."

In other ways, Bolivar does not emerge unsmirched by the corruption of his time. After a loan from England had been squandered in speculation by officials, countenanced by him, he pocketed his winnings in a card game with Santander with the remark that "at last a part of the loan has come my way." In brief, the author presents a man with a "cap and sword philosophy" with a "personal need for freedom from all law."

The morals of Bolivar are not spared. We have him wrecking his health in sexual excesses in Lima—his gallery of women too large for the Prado. "But," says Madariaga, "There was in his thirst for women something more than animal desire. \*\*\* There was in it a yearning to escape from his inner void."

When his wife died, Madariaga notes, Bolivar "made up his mind not to marry again, and lived through a series of affairs, often overlapping, and none strong enough to tie him to constancy. There is a connection between the first love, cut off by death, and the rest, successively dissolved by life. In his marriage, as we see it, Bolivar subconsciously sought to regain access to his own self, blocked since the death of his

mother. The attempt having been broken when he was already hardening into manhood, the access had to remain blocked." Swift in love as in thought and action, Bolívar never kept an attachment for long, nor was the faithful while it lasted. The colorful Manuela, the only woman he really loved, tolerated his infidelities for a generous allowance, political power and "freedom for amorous adventures of her own."

The moving story of these tumultuous years, involving Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, with the rivalries of leaders, clashing sectionalism, victories, defeats and countercharges, marches smoothly and clearly, for the author has marshaled his

Madariaga has recreated the romantic, dramatic, enormous material with his usual skill.

sordid, bloody scenes that made South America nineteenth century a Shakespearean stage. Lesser figures appear for a moment and vanish, but on stage throughout are Santander, Miranda, Sucre and San Martín, all vividly presented. The author does not content himself with the outlines of the exterior man, but seeks the soul, and one gets the impression that he finds it.

"Bolívar" is a brilliant achievement, charming in style, penetrating in its interpretations of men and motives. Though the myths are destroyed, the real man emerges still, one of the most dramatic and fascinating figures in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

C. G. B.

**WOMAN ON HORSEBACK: The Story of Francisco López and Elisa Lynch.** By William E. Barrett. 302 p p. New York: Doubleday & Co.

OF THE three women who dominated the hearts of men who at one time or another dominated portions of South America, Elisa Lynch was the most subtle, the most sophisticated and probably the most intelligent. She was most certainly the only Anglo-Saxon ever to take on the job of riding at the side of a latino liberator or dictator. (In South America

it was sometimes a bit difficult to tell which was which.)

Yet the beautiful Irish-born Elisa, who linked her fate in Paris with that of Francisco Solano López and went out with him to his native Paraguay, which at that time had the fattest treasury in all the continent lived out her final years wandering over Europe in grinding poverty. She was buried in a pauper's grave, an end similar to that of Manuela Sáenz, who was at the side of Simón Bolívar during his years of triumph and glory.

Neither Elisa Lynch nor Manuela Sáenz had the common touch of an Eva Perón, and neither of them achieved marriage with the strong men they supported. (Among other reasons, both had contracted marriages in their youth which would have made things awkward in the eyes of the Church.) Yet all three women are certain to be considered in the perspective of history as having had a great deal in common. The parallel between López's guiding star and Juan Perón's powerful partner is admittedly the reason for reissuing "Woman on Horseback," which was first published fourteen years ago.

In a good many respects Elisa Lynch is the most interesting of the three; or at least she becomes so in William E. Barrett's account. And any tendency to dismiss her as unimportant because her domain of Paraguay seems insignificant today should be checked against the fact that at the time of her reign a hundred years ago that little country not only had the most gold but the largest standing army in all South America. It took the combined forces of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay five bloody years to conquer it.

If Mr. Barrett's style seems a trifle overwrought, it undoubtedly can be set down to his unremitting effort to make persons long dead and forgotten and events which took place a century ago seem alive and actual today. His main difficulty has been lack of documentation, and he has had to compensate for this by doing a good deal more creative work in the line of characterization than is desirable in a straight bio-

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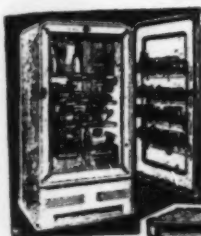
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raphy. But the psychological processes he bestows upon Elisa Lynch are convincing as well as fascinating. If they are true then she was truly an amazing woman whose story transcends her own era.

V. L. W.

**SPRING IN SPAIN.** By Mackinley Helm. Illustrated 315 pp. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

**P** AUSANIAS wrote the original recipe for travel books. "Such," he says, "are the most famous traditions and sights from the mass of material. I have aimed on the outset at selecting the really notable." Some 1800 years later MacKinley Helm. Author of "Journeying Through Mexico," follows the same prescription. He selects the notable. But as to what the notable is, many travelers have many answers; a puzzle to which our author makes sensible reply. He follows his personal and definite taste, and perhaps the most original quality of his book lies in his esthetic approach, coming as it does not from the usual study of primitive or medieval art but from long subjection to the influences of Orozco, Diego Rivera and their mates, with the prolific exfoliation of Mexican baroque as a background.

He follows the river from the mouth up; not from the source down, and as a modern among moderns, his social and political sympathies take on the color of his tastes. This reader, who is a survival rather than a modernist, was surprised and pleased to find the author not only respectful but spellbound by the loveliest of Spanish monuments, the ancient. Evidently, there are two roads to the appreciation of art.

This is apparently Mr. Helm's first visit to the mainland of Spain. To the experienced traveler there, two facts are always present. First, Spain was the most thoroughly Romanized of the imperial provinces; second, she consists of a congeries of countries. It accords with reality that her monarchs were crowned King of the Spains, for each province protests its separate individuality and, in Viscaya and Barcelona at least, almost its independence.



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Mr. Helm's journey is a restricted tour. The holiness of Compostella, the glory of León, the medieval miracle of Burgos—these he missed. But much he saw, and saw with that exuberance of delight that comes only once. A second visit and a third bring maturer satisfactions but the wonder of revelation is no longer there.

Another agreeable practice, Mr. Helm owes to Pausanias. He intersperses his description with much history as well as talk from the local scene. He is erudite but not austere and a cutlet of white veal at Avila or better, a jereboam of fine brandy in Madrid, share the honors with the impressionistic gold and silver of Velasquez or the Plateresque elegance of a Salamanca facade. His impromptu intimacies, too, with chance strangers relieve didacticism. Especially I invite the reader to an adventure of his, exhibiting the starting authority which the display by a non-descript priest, of the visible wounds of St. Francis on his hands and feet, exercised on the love affair of a young married man and another's wife, both well disposed to fellow temptation where it led. To tell that story again would be to pull a fat plum from the pudding.

Mr. Helm is erudite. Knowledge has led him perhaps to retell more than is necessary of familiar history, but his understanding appreciation of Baroque art and the zest with which he follows its dizzy descent into the Churrigueresque is exhilarating. Our fathers thought the Baroque degenerate and vulgar. For us it has the charm of a garden decayed from the centuries.

Not until he nears the end does Mr. Helm disclose the motive of his journey. He is ambitious to trace from Mallorca, its birthplace, the career of Fray Junipero Serra, the good padre who blessed California with Christianity and became a founder of San Francisco. The author's is a pious quest and we trust he may feel rewarded.

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**HAITI: Highroad to Adventure.** By Hugh B. Cave. Illustrat-  
ed. 306 pp. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

**T** I KABRIT—Little Goat—was the name that Hugh Cave, his wife and their two sons, then 10 and 5, gave to the brave little jeep they took with them to Haiti. They went in search of adventure and, presumably, material, since Mr. Cave had written five previous books and much slick-magazine copy. Like a sturdy little goat, the jeep carried the Caves all over and around the mountains of Haiti, a country which is about 99 per cent mountains.

The family's adventures consisted primarily of driving along roads that often were only half-empty river beds, and penetrating deep into the backward areas of a country whose forward areas are themselves on the fringes of modern civilization. The Caves fell in love with Haiti and with the Haitian people, as do most Americans who visit that strange, and sometimes exceedingly fair, land.

The people of Haiti are as poor as their land, and sick and dirty and hungry; sometimes their future seems utterly hopeless. Yet the land and the Haitians have an indefinable quality which captures the hearts of visitors and makes them long to return. Mr. Cave's account of his journeys, of the magnificent scenery which is one of the few natural resources in which Haiti is rich, and of the men and women he came to know, is never quite able to explain this phenomenon, or to focus enough highlights on the picture he attempts to draw.

P. F.



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# Current Attractions

## DRAMA

By Vane C. Dalton

**I**N the realm of dramatic art the year 1952 has signified a stride of valid achievement. It has not, to be sure, brought up our stage to a degree of actual florescence, but it has undoubtedly brought it closer to a possible ultimate revival. It has served to solidify and to clarify the position of our as yet essentially incipient dramatic art.

For one thing, we have observed with hopeful interest the quite successful efforts of various "little theatre" groups, those performing in such improvised quarters as "El Caballito," or "El Caracol, and the wide public acceptance that has been accorded plays by Mexican authors. The marked improvement in the quality of direction and performance is yet another encouraging sign. For it is by way of these little theatres and works by native authors presented in an adequate manner, that Mexico is gradually developing a native dramatic art, that is to say, it is freeing itself of the negative Spanish tradition which up to recent years was unchallenged and prevalent on our stage.

Broadly, our stage may be divided into two sectors—i.e., the professional and the experimental. The professional, or strictly commercial, theatre, holding forth in such ancient playhouses as the "Ideal," "Arben" or "Iris," still preserves the anachronistic influence of the Spanish stage. The experimental, on the other hand, while quite professional in a practical sense, is seeking to evolve a native expression based on universal modern influence.

It may be said that the traditional Spanish type theatre—with its motheaten mores, its hokum and "astracanda," its bullring fanfaronade, its puerile themes and frothy magniloquence—will most likely

persist in Mexico so long as these horsecar playhouses are still here to accommodate it, for they provide a perfect atmosphere and background for this kind of mildewed fare. They are, in other words, quite insuitable for an adequate presentation of the kind of plays our experimental theatre offers.

Hence, the future progress of our experimental drama to a large extent depends upon the availability of suitable playhouses—upon the creation of truly new theatres where the new kind of Mexican drama may be developed. And in this respect a definite beginning has been made during the foregoing year. Three new and quite modern playhouses—the "Hidalgo," "Insurgentes" and "Fábricas"—have been built in the past twelve months and are to be opened in the near future.

As regards our performers—and I am of course referring to those of the experimental stage—there has been a marked and general improvement in the quality of acting, an improvement which doubtless reflects the guidance of such capable directors as Seki Sano, Salvador Novo and Luis G. Basurto. The dramatic training schools, such as those conducted by the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) and by Seki Sano, have likewise lent their important share to this improvement. It is obvious, however, that a truly modern and properly staffed school of dramatic acting



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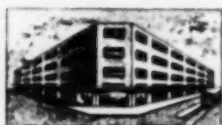
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is still wanting in our midst. Our younger actors, lacking as they do a source of guidance that may come from practical example; that is to say, lacking the professional example that may be provided by older actors, must acquire their knowledge and training with the aid of competent teachers.

So much for our playhouses and actors. As regards our playwrights, the status of our modern stage is essentially still in its pioneering era. Our experimental repertory is yet largely made up of translated works. Rodolfo Usigli, Celestino Gorostiza, Salvador Novo, Sergio Magaña, and at most two or three others, have provided the vehicles that have kept our modern stage alive and have given it a Mexican direction. In one way or another they have all created plays that transcend mere entertainment, that bear a direct contact with Mexican reality and that fearlessly challenge its foibles, its follies and evils. Usigli's "Jano es Una Muchacha," Gorostiza's "El Color de Nuestra Piel," Novo's "La Culta Dama" and Magaña's "Los Signos del Zodíaco," all of which were produced during the course of the foregoing year, may be justly accepted as cornerstone achievements. All of these are excellent plays that in their different manners boldly defy negative traditions, not only on our stage but in life as well, and that set excellent examples for newer talents.

But we sorely need more plays of this kind. If our theatre is to prosper plays like these must not be isolated and fortuitous occurrences. Our public interest must be stimulated and sustained indefinitely by productions of veritable merit. Even more, our public taste must be thus elevated to higher standards: it must be rendered more discerning and exigent.

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For it is lamentably true that if our dramatic art has to date achieved the beginnings of a few suitable playhouses, of a reduced number of competent actors and an equally reduced number of capable authors, it yet must create an ample and appreciative audience, an audience that has a viewpoint, that has a sound criterion as to what is good or bad, true or false, cheap and banal or noble and sincere. What we need, in other words, is a sound public opinion. It is undeniable that our experimental theatre has been attracting steadily growing audiences, that some plays, such, for instance, as Usigli's "Jano es Una Muchacha," have scored the records of several hundred performances; but it is likewise undeniable that boxoffice success has not always defined intelligent public appreciation. Our public, in fact, has often simply responded to able publicity; it has accepted what it has been given and has applauded indiscriminately the good and the bad.

This, on the other hand, might be largely due to the deplorable poverty of local theatrical criticism, to the fact that our press commentators, by and large products of the horsecab school, lack the necessary experience, erudition or discernment to formulate an intelligent opinion, hence what they write can hardly provide a source of common orientation.

But the lack of sound criticism as well as of valid public appreciation, in the final analysis, merely reflects a common cultural deficiency, which, if we may trust the signs of our times, is being gradually ameliorated. It is gratifying, for instance, to observe the multiplication in recent years of book stores in our central streets, and the surprisingly high quality of books displayed in their windows. It is obvious that many thousands of people in our midst read good books, and it is among these thousands that we may find a latent appreciative audience for good drama.



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## Art and Personal Notes

**S**ALON de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154) is offering through this month a voluminous and unusually interesting exhibition of prints, drawings and paintings in various mediums by forty and some odd of our better-known artists—a roster which comprises a veritable who-is-who of our contemporary art. The exhibition, featuring a very modest price-list, is a special holiday offering.

**A** SIMILAR "bargain offering" is being made at this time by the Galeria Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado No. 16 C), totalling a collection of more than a thousand works—paintings, prints and drawings—by many of our most outstanding artists. This offering actually represents a liquidation of the stocks on hand by this gallery, prior to its removal to new and more suitable quarters.

**P** AINTINGS, prints, ceramics and sculpture by the versatile artist Francisco Gonzalez are currently on show at Calle de Paris No. 74, Coyoacán.

**T** HE following shows are being offered during this month by the National Institute of Fine Arts:

At the Sala Bellas Artes of the Museo Nacional de Artes Plasticas, Palacio de Bellas Artes, paintings by Jesús Guerrero Galván; at the Sala de Estampa of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, reproductions of works by Leonardo da Vinci; at the Galeria José Guadalupe Posada (Corner of Dr. Vertiz and Dr. Liceaga), prints by various contemporary local print-makers on the subject of Emiliano Zapata, and at the Galeria Cervantes (Corner of Heroes and Esmeralda), selected works by

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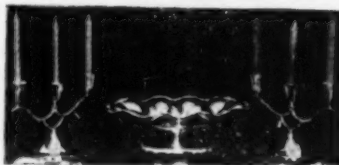
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**T**HE Art Gallery of Libreria Juarez (Avenida Juarez No. 102) is presenting a somewhat novel group of paintings in oil by J. Cañas, which are all based on zoological themes. The artist has made a special study of caged animals while visiting parks in Spain, England and the United States, with, as his paintings reveal, quite interesting and profitable results.

**P**AINTINGS and drawings by Vlady are on exhibit during this month at the Galeria Prisse (Calle de Londres No. 163). The work of this artist, particularly his fine and incisive drawings, reveals a rich and varied influence of his European background adapted in a quite individual manner to the Mexican scene.

**P**AINTINGS in oil by a young Spanish artist Xavier de Oteyza are on show at the Ateneo Español (Avenida Morelos No. 61). Including landscapes of Spain, still life and portraits, this exposition presents for the first time a self-taught artist of considerable talent and skill who achieves a note of individuality employing the somewhat outmoded impressionist manner of un-mixed paints heavily laid on with a palette knife.

**G**ALERIA Arte Contemporaneo (Calle de Amberes No. 12) is showing a group of monotypes on pre-Conquest Mexican themes by Desiderio Hernandez, who is known under the signature of Xochitiotzin. In addition to this show this gallery is exhibiting a large collection of works—paintings, sculpture and photographs—by various contemporary Mexican artists, especially gathered for the current season of gifts.



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#### Patterns of an old City

Continued from page 22

And still occasionally she had to resort to sedatives in order to sleep, and she could not rid herself of an acutely depressing sense of loss and loneliness that possessed her each morning during the first moments of wakefulness. No matter how she passed or finished the day, its beginning was always that of anxiety and dejection. It was a kind of subconscious loathing to forego the oblivion of sleep and to confront the reality of daytime.

Fighting against this persisting morning melancholy, she acquired the habit of calling her friends on the telephone, of engaging them, under the pretext of some community task, in lengthy and often quite trivial talk, until she realized after a time that such calls were not always welcome, that they were becoming obtrusive and somewhat tedious, for her listeners revealed a growing apathy or broke off under some flimsy excuse.

And gradually this melancholy, this brunt of solitude, extended throughout the day. The sundry activities she pursued with such assiduity did not actually fill her time. Presently they began to seem artificial, contrived, to seem to be a substitute for some truly

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useful and necessary task. They did not fill the inner void; they did not truly define a purpose in life or its justification. But there was no other outlet. Lonely, unhappy and bored, she persisted with these activities as a means to an end. Unfulfilling as they were, they yet provided a course of social contact; they gave her a sort of position; kept her, so to speak, in circulation.

Men were not her conscious object. Without either actually pursuing or avoiding them, she accepted their occasional companionship with a kind of amiable defensive indifference. Unattached men of an appropriate age and aligible type are, however, not very plentiful in Mexico, and those she did meet did not inspire more than passing interest. In her middle fifties she still justly regarded herself as desirable. Along the street men still cast her an occasional interested glance; for indeed, with her trim figure, her clear blue eyes and a face almost devoid of wrinkles preserving in its oval contour a marked trace of beauty she had in her youth, she was yet a quite attractive woman. Lacking a tangible aim, enduring the torture of loneliness, she yet preserved a vague optimism within her aloofness.

She met Lloyd in Cuernavaca at the house of some friends where she was spending a weekend. This was shortly after the war, and like many other student veterans he was living in Mexico on a government scholarship, studying painting. Art, he timidly confided to her, had not been his pursuit before the war. He had been studying accountancy and business administration; but he decided to give it up because he was convinced that he was not really cut out for it, while painting pictures seemed a pretty nice kind of a thing to do. He still did not know much about it, he confessed, but in modern art academic skill was not very important. A man had to discover and evolve his own personal terms to honestly express himself.

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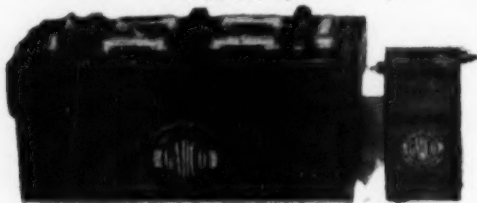
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There was something helpless and pathetic about him, she thought. He had suffered no bodily injury in the war but he had been spiritually hurt, probably quite badly hurt. He aroused in her dim maternal yearnings. He seemed confused and forlorn and in need of encouragement, of disinterested friendship, the companionship of an older and more experienced friend. She did not think there was anything wrong in giving him her address in the city and inviting him to come for dinner during the following week.

She prepared a very nice dinner and enjoyed watching him eat with boyish relish. He said that being compelled to eat in cheap restaurants, a meal like this was a real treat. Later, as they were having their liqueurs, she put on a record of Beethoven's seventh symphony and was pleased to discover that the music did not bore him. During the subsequent weeks he became a frequent caller, and occasionally they went out together to a picture show. And although she was not well informed in the abstruse realm of art, and despite his verbal limitations, they found a lot to talk about.

They were married two months after they met by a judge of a civil juzgado, solely accompanied by the indispensable four witnesses, sending, however, announcement cards to their friends with an "at home" enclosure, postdated to follow the two weeks they spent in Acapulco.

Through the initial months of adjustment she found genuine satisfaction in his helplessness, in his total dependence upon her; and it was not the satisfaction of superiority but of humble servitude, of veritable self-abnegation, of having encountered a vital concern, of having retrieved through his person a new direction and purpose in life. And the essence of the vital concern she found was to imbue him likewise with a new direction and purpose, to help him find himself, to muster his talents, organize his efforts and crystallize his goal.

But to her dismay she soon realized that it was impossible to help him, that she was unable to guide or encourage him, because her understanding of art or feeling for it was lamentably slight, because she lacked discernment and was incapable of intelligent apprecia-

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tion. She could spur him on through kindness and affection; but she discovered that probably because he was an artist he was essentially a solitary being, that she could get near him only to a determined extent, and that beyond that he was hermetically inaccessible, closed in a kind of mute and painful solitude.

She did persuade him after a time to attend regular art-school classes; but he found drawing, or any disciplined instruction, a bore and soon gave it up. He preferred to work with several other student veterans in a kind of free auto-didactic empirical fashion at a studio they jointly maintained in a somewhat squalid section of the city. He seemed to keep busy in a sort of lackadaisical fashion; though when after a time she surmised that besides paint a great deal of alcohol was consumed at the studio, she induced him to work at home.

Apparently never knowing exactly what he was trying to do, he covered and recovered many yards of canvas, producing weird compositions whose meaning he seemed unable to fully explain to her, and in the end she avoided queries, for they seemed to annoy him. Art doesn't need explaining, he said, and if it's worth a damn it speaks for itself. Meanwhile he developed the habit of staying away from home during the gradually extending intervals when he was not at work, usually returning slightly drunk, or of sitting through lethargic hours at his easel without lifting a brush, stirring only to reach for the bottle.

She went to considerable expense and trouble in arranging a public exhibit, and soon became convinced that it had been a mistake; for though quite a few people came look at the paintings almost nothing was sold, and this left him profoundly disheartened. It brought on a despondence and an apathy from which he never recovered. He was morose, bewildered, petulant and quarrelsome. He drank entirely too much and was childishly irresponsible. But being more completely lost and helpless than he had been before he needed her now more than ever, and she found strength in this need and consolation in his wayward precarious clinging. Stalwart and resolute and eternally patient, she

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accepted this helpless clinging with unspoken gratitude and humble devotion.

And although behind their backs people were likely to say that her "cradle-snatching" had turned out to be something of a flop, for the fair-haired boy she had on her hands was actually hardly more than a sap and a drunkard, in her eyes Lloyd was neither a punishment or reward but a living reality she had made for herself and had to make the best of.

\*\*\*

Riding home in a taxi, with Lloyd's head limply resting over her shoulder, she felt relieved and gratified at the way things turned out toward the end. She had feared that he had reached and passed the dangerous point and would grow obstreperous and obstinate, but luckily she trailed behind him as he followed someone out on the street, probably to prolong some contentious discussion, and there was this godsent taxi waiting at the curb. She hustled him inside before he fully realized what was taking place, and now they were peacefully bound for home.

Sheer luck, she thought. Sheer good luck. For once nothing went wrong. The Woodliffs had been spared embarrassment. Loyal friends. Kind and understanding. So good of them to invite us, to still count us in. About the last of the old crowd...

As the car swerved at a street-crossing Lloyd lifted his head and dropped it again on her shoulder, mumbling, "Prr 'ty nashh pahty. Hadda shwell time." "Yes, darling," she said, placing her arm around his shoulder. "It was a very nice party."

## Un Poco de Todo

Continued from page 33

Dr. Caster is astounded by the resemblance of animal and vegetative life of South America and Africa. Certain geologic features "seem clearly to have been developed on the two sides, sometimes simultaneously," he says.

# B.

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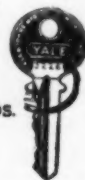
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As yet there is no satisfactory manner of accounting for "certain geologic relations" as preserved in Africa and South America without assuming some connection across the South Atlantic basin. Even when a connecting "bridge" was covered by shoal waters, interchange of swimming and floating forms of animal and vegetable marine life was rapid, Dr. Caster holds.

"There is nothing in the fauna (of these two continental areas) as a whole to suggest the existence of any barrier, other than distance, between the African and American scenes during the end of the Triassic—about 170,000,000 years ago—or possibly into the early Jurassic—about 130,000,000 years ago," says Dr. Caster.

The "continental drift" theory advanced by Taylor and elaborated by Alfred Lothar Wegener, German geophysicist and meteorologist, and advocated in 1927 by Alexander Du Toit, South African geologist, is unimportant, in Dr. Caster's opinion.

### Drama of the Ancient

Continued from page 21

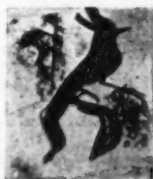
In the mid-twentieth century the best Western literary schools have produced works whose originality and vitality could not be adequately explained without taking into consideration the native sap that nourishes them. We need only mention the delicate "El Sombrero" (The Big Hat), by Mexico's Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano; the powerful tragedy "Ave de Sacrificio" (Bird of Sacrifice), by his compatriot Margarita Urueta; and the restatement of the "Ollantay" theme in modern form, without loss of its primitive quality, by Argentina's Ricardo Rojas.

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### Ciudad Obregon

Continued from page 18

has never been a dull moment. I remember the tropical fruit salad that Pilar served one day; made of mangoes, papayas, sapotes, and pineapples, cubed and nearly frozen in the refrigerator; and the chicken enchiladas, baked with thick cream. Pilar can cook better than any other Mexican woman I have ever known.

One day, I arrived in town and Kibby informed me that the oyster season had just opened. We went down the block to a large high-vaulted room where planters were sipping their afternoon beer, and eating raw oysters. Boys with pushearts came into the place, with live oysters, and opened them while we ate.

Oysters with chili sauce and crackers, washed down with Carta Blanca beer, make an unbeatable combination. I am sure I ate several dozen. We finally discovered that it was about dinnertime, and returned to Kibby's house. Pilar met us at the door.

"I know how much you like oysters," she informed me, "so I bought some nice fresh ones in the market. I have them fixed three ways; raw, in the cocktail sauce; stewed in the soup; and baked, with fresh green corn."

We sat down to that table and cleaned up every dish. That's what I mean when I say Pilar can cook.

I cannot imagine myself passing through Ciudad Obregon without a visit with my friends, Kibby and Pilar. There is something stimulating about a woman who can cook that way, and a man who is equally proficient in raising hogs, eating oysters, or playing polo.

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**Corners in antiquity**  
Continued from page 25

was difficult to restrain the bitter tears. We knew Pablo Pacheco had turned informer. Our youthful hearts were broken, and black with disillusion. The crisis, however, passed with well-bred decorum, for Pablo kept out of sight. But the coals of fire that were heaped upon our rebellious heads were almost too overwhelming. Uncle Claude rode over on his fine Arabian stallion to say good-bye, accompanied by his stirrup servant. He presented us each with two purses full of American money—to buy ourselves, among other things, proper hats such as young American gentlemen wore. Aunt Juliana drove over in her lumbering carriage and brought enough rich dulces to give us stomach-aches for a month. Only at the last, at the station, did Pablo appear. He had the face to sing us a farewell song, accompanying himself on the guitar that he could pluck better than anyone on earth. As he embraced me, I hissed in his ear 'Traidor!' He kissed me on the cheek and cooed 'Mi general!'

"As the train pulled out, the careers of two future generals of Mexico were nipped in the bud. We did not return for three years."

"And so you missed the Revolution?"

"All of it. It passed over Oaxaca with less fury of destruction and bloodshed than it did in the north. We were out of the beaten track. The big land divisions did not come until much later, under Cárdenas. In the end, I got cheated out of my patrimony without having the fun of fighting to defend it, or tossing it about to the peons in a lordly gesture."

A light drizzle of rain began to fall. We thought it wise to climb down before the stairs got slippery.

"And Pablo Pacheco?" I said as we got up and stretched our legs.

"Ah, Pablo! He ended as you might expect—with his handsome throat slit from ear to ear by a woman, one of the hundreds he maddened with jealousy. She begged him to return—her lily flower, she called him, her love, her white ram—on any terms, even to bring the new girl, for she had bought a bed big enough for three. When he would not come back, not even to sing her one good-bye song, she sought him and cut his throat with a butcher knife while he was sleeping off a hangover under a willow tree."

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We paused halfway down the staircase for a last view of the valley that was partly in shadowy mist, partly in sun.

...

"But Pablo was the most wonderful stirrup servant in all Mexico. He was a he-man plus. He was a tall Indian, with just enough Spanish blood to season him and give him dark-auburn hair. He was as handsome as a hero in a cloak-and-dagger romance, but very real flesh and blood."

"What was his real job?"

He held the stirrup when my father mounted, and rode at his side."

We laughed. "A kind of body servant."

"And a bodyguard. There was extraordinary power in his muscles, and he was lightning-quick and accurate with a gun. Those he could not conquer by his beguiling ways might have their bones cracked. If stronger measures were necessary, Pablo could send a bullet through precisely the center of whatever bodily organ he chose for the coup de grace. He sat a horse magnificently and dressed superbly. He spent all his wages on his clothes. Once he spent three months' wages on a white sombrero loaded with silver embroidery. It was so elegant, however, that he hardly dared to wear it when out with my father. I often wondered why my father was not jealous, because Pablo made so much more an impressive spectacle than he. But my father adored him, and twice he saved my father's life from brigands. I can tell you, those stirrup servants always 'put out their chest' for the master."

We had reached the ground, and my eye was caught by some hieroglyphics on a wall before which lay objects in stone. As I moved over toward for a glance, I asked, "Were stirrup servants common to all the gentry?"

"In this district they were. A Spanish colonial hangover that a century of republicanism had not blotted out. The stirrup servant served two purposes: to protect the life and limb of the master on the high-

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way and in the tavern, and to be his emissary and decoy in the pursuit of venery. Up to a quarter-century ago, gentlemen still made an art of illicit romance, as Englishmen did in the eighteenth century. Men of Spanish blood escaped the stuffy Victorian household morality that came in with the nineteenth century.

"Stirrup servants were selected for their sex appeal and musical talents, as well as for their marksmanship and punch of fist. They did the serenading—a gentleman could not properly serenade a girl of the people. They did the preliminary courting, and made the rendezvous. The master finished the job. It was all ordered in a kind of back-street Chaucerian courtliness. The girls knew they were to be deceived in the end—that they would have to take the middle-aged master for the lusty servant. Stirrup servants were the personal love scouts of the time. They were far too elegant ever to be vulgarly called 'pimps.' And the thought of immorality did not enter the civilized picture—any more than it did in the days when the Indians created images like those objects and set them up in their temples for the world to see what made the world go on."

Señor C. motioned to a row of sleek and monstrous phalluses carved out of greenish stone. They had been unearthed and laid at the base of the wall with hieroglyphics, waiting to be classified and either left here, or sent to a museum. "The cult of sex belonged to the primitive Indian heritage, as well as that of the cultivated Spanish. But now in this present age, the formulas of its pursuit have become as crude as jukeboxes. The refinements of stirrup servants have passed forever—gone with the wind, like the landed gentry."

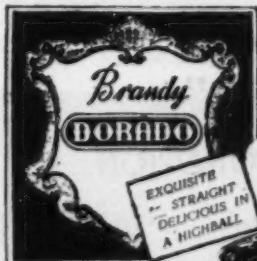
"I don't think you have become reconciled to the achievements of the Revolution," I said questioningly.

A cloud passed over Señor C.'s face. "The Revolution took the little watch to pieces—but it was not able to put it together again."

Favoring the Revolution, whatever its mistakes, I might have launched into a stout defense. But there was no use to start an argument. I did venture to say, with some gentleness: "But the watch was very



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old, wasn't it? Its mechanism was worn and rusty, and it did need cleaning badly, didn't it? The job is too complicated to finish in a short period of years."

Señor C. gave me a long look, shrugged, and then with a smile decided to let it pass.

"Was all your land taken from you?" Myers asked. "Did you keep the hacienda house?"

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While we were talking, twilight, which lasts only a few minutes in southern Mexico, had come. The guardian of the ruins came up to ask if we would let him ride back with us. We left the pyramids, the mounds and the tombs of undivulged treasure to the night.

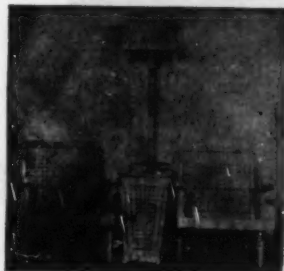
As we drove down the winding road from the citadel, a flock of white milk goats came leaping down the side of a little ravine and rushed to a trough where girls were drawing water for their last drink of the day. We passed some square houses of dried mud, where dwell the families that owned the goats. I recalled that some Mexican traveler of the past had been deeply impressed that they did not crumble. He had written: "That these little squarish mud-heaps endure for centuries after centuries, while Greek marble tumbles asunder, and cathedrals totter, is the wonder. But then, the naked human hand with a bit of new soft mud is quicker than time, and defies the centuries."

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The humble houses lined the roadway of the valley. Temples up on the hill had disintegrated to mounds of earth and stone stairs and fragments of grotesque picture writing. Only the retrieved jewelry, safe in the museum, and the phalluses that remained stanch in all weathers, spoke in positive accents through time.

Though the gentleman had shown us great courtesy in driving us out to Monte Albán, and though we entertained him at dinner and at apéritifs on the plaza, though we had several mutual friends, and though he seemed to like us, he did not invite us to his home. I had hoped to glimpse family life in Oaxaca. I had wanted to see what provincial society was like. But only rarely does the most flourishing or most intimate letter of introduction get the stranger through the portals of a Mexican home.

**Taxco and Guanajuato**  
Continued from page 14

low them, where narrow, crooked slits between white walls and red roofs indicate twisting streets, is the square, flat-roofed house which belonged to José de la Borda—one of the few flat-roofed houses in town. To the right of it, forming an umbrella over the plaza, is a mass of dark leaves, and above their dense verdure rise the inescapable exclamatory towers of San Sebastián and Santa Prisca. Bells hang with dignified repose in their round-arched frames, while, by contrast, the fanciful columns of the corners seem to dance in a joyful exuberance of carving.

As we leave our precarious perch, the setting sun casts patches of waning light among the long purple shadows on the rolling mountains across the valley far below, and, striking the dome of the great church, sparkles on the blue and white tile and the patterns of yellow laid down in its image. God gave generously to Borda. But Borda, in his own way, and in a setting most suitable for the gracious gesture, gave lavishly to God.

Guanajuato is not as easy to reach as Taxco and is much less visited by Americans. It is quite accessible by rail, however, part of the distance over a branch line, and is not at all impossible by motor. A paved road leading off the Pan-American highway goes to Querétaro, a dirt road continues to Celaya, and from there to Guanajuato improvements are being made which, except for possible construction, make the road quite passable. An alternate route from Morelia (which is now easily reached on pavement) is not deluxe, but in the dry season can be used. Bog-



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gy stretches in the road may make it necessary to drive through fields for a few miles, or bedrock exposed on the surface of the mountains may make it necessary to search for the continuation of the dusty tracks which form the main road part of the way, but the city is well worth it. When a paved road is completed to Guanajuato, that exotic city will unquestionably be on the "must" list of most travelers to Mexico.

The approach to the city is dramatic. When one feels that he has come to the end of the world, and the road has petered out almost entirely to become a trail climbing up among gorges cut out of the rocks, one suddenly and most amazingly descends on pavement into a city which spreads out below, so thoroughly tucked away in the mountains that one has to pinch himself to believe it is real.

Its one main street winds through the center of the city along the bottom of the long deep valley much as a river winds along its bed, with tributary and precipitous byways falling down sometimes in torrents to the main street at the bottom. Indeed, at one time a river did plunge through the center of the city beneath picturesque bridges, but in time of flood caused so much damage that a tunnel was eventually built to divert the overflow and prevent a recurrence of such disasters. That one monumental street is paved with great blocks of cut stone, giving it almost the finished appearance of an attenuated Piazza San Marco; while most of its little precipitous tributaries, by contrast, have never known the very rudiments of paving. One must, indeed, watch his step. The monumental fronts of prosperous-looking buildings line this thoroughfare and its few main branches where, in the heart of the city, it spreads out to form islands of buildings; while the square, flat-roofed hou-

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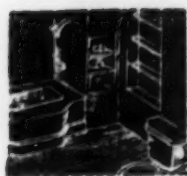
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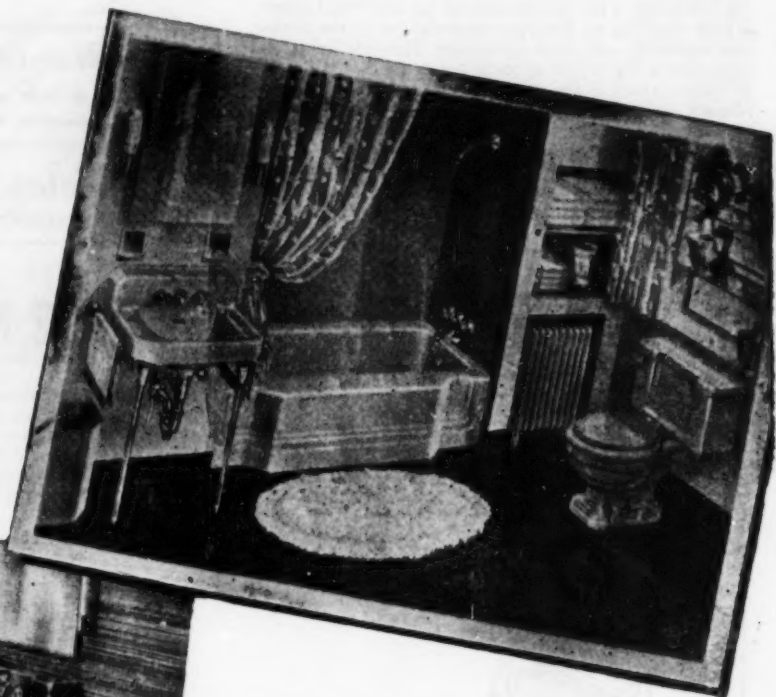


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ses, piled one above another along the many narrow, steep, zigzagging tributaries which drop to the bottom from all directions, afford a contrast which, in the intimacy of it all, is hard to equal anywhere.

Almost at the end of the valley and that winding, paved thoroughfare, one comes upon a little plaza, the Jardín de la Unión, with tile pavement and carefully trimmed Indian laurel trees, and faced on one side by a monumental theatre and small church with a Churrigueresque facade which is a gem. On another side is a small hotel with a two-story patio filled with palms and flowers and singing birds. From the wrought-iron balconies of that hotel, which reach out over the pavement, the well-kept and intimate city garden, at a narrow end of the valley and hemmed in rather closely by the mountains, seems far indeed from the outside world.

Guanajuato, the name of which comes from an Indian word meaning "Hill of the Frogs," was, like Taxco, founded on silver. Not long after the Conquest, rich mineral veins were discovered, and from then on, with the zeal of the Spaniards and the sweat of the Indians, silver flowed from Guanajuato in a steady stream to swell the coffers of the Court of Spain and add to the earthly splendor of the Church.

The great "mining church" of Guanajuato is not actually in the city; so before we take the very bumpy two or three mile trip up to the site of the great Valenciana mine where San Cayetano is built, there are three churches in the city well worth pausing to visit.

Conspicuously placed on the main thoroughfare is the parochial Church of San Francisco, originally begun in 1671 (and completed in 1696) as the Church of San Juan de Dios. In 1828, when it passed into the hands of the Franciscans, the church was seriously injured by reconstruction, both on the exterior and in the interior, only the sacristy and the adjacent baptistry remaining unchanged. The sacristy, a high vaulted room behind the high altar, had been added to the church in 1745. From the sacristy, a richly decor-



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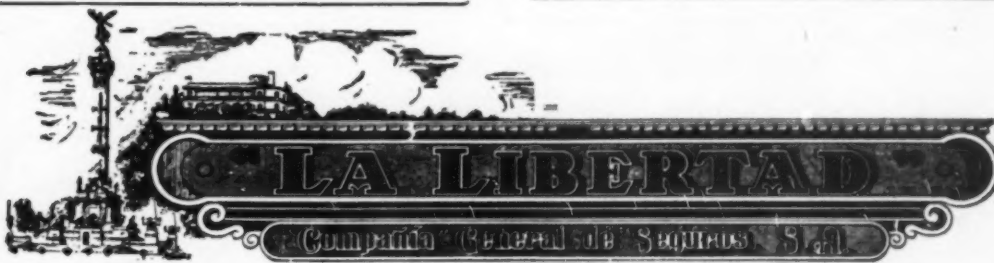
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ated doorway leads into what is now the baptistry, but was originally a camarin for the vestments of the famous Virgin of Guanajuato, a figure with a most interesting history. It is said to have existed in Spain in the seventh century, where it was venerated in a shrine near Granada. When Spain was invaded by the Moors the image was taken by the devout people of Granada and hidden in a cave to save it from the infidels. For more than eight centuries it remained there, and when it was removed it is said to have been in perfect condition, in spite of the dampness of the cave. In 1557, Philip II of Spain, in appreciation of the vast royalties received from the mines there presented the image to Guanajuato, where it became and has remained the patroness of the city.

\* \* \*

Not far away is the great Jesuit Church of La Compañía, begun in 1747 and dedicated in 1765. The original plans were drawn by Fray José de la Cruz, who was later succeeded in the work by the architect Don Felipe Acuña. The front of the church, placed on a high, narrow platform, is a curious blending of Baroque and Churrigueresque forms. The huge dome is not the original one. Early in the nineteenth century, carelessness in carrying out certain alterations so weakened the piers of the old dome that the enormous mass fell in and has been replaced by a modern dome, designed by Vicente Heredia of Mexico City. The new dome, an imposing structure with a drum of two stories, the lower story colonnaded (a design hardly in keeping with the rest of the structure), is scarcely visible from the streets of the crowded city, but from the mountains which hem in the valley it is a dominant feature in the landscape.

The spacious interior is one of the most impressive in Mexico, not for what it has in it, as is so apt to be the case when church interiors in Mexico amount to anything at all, but for itself. Carried out in a simple, classical design, not just what one would expect to find behind the elaborately carved facade and the rather fussy and stumpy belfry of the one tower, the

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nave and aisles are magnificently proportioned. The church has a total length of 201 feet, a width of 94 feet, and an interior height of somewhat more than 66 feet. Contributing equally to the impressiveness of the interior are the color and texture of the local stone used—a combination of grayish brown and a soft dark green blending with chocolate in the altars.

The Church of San Diego, which faces the Jardín de la Unión, is notable for a Churrigueresque facade which is a fine example of the richness of that style, symmetrically carried out with boldness and vigor. The present church was built after the middle of the eighteenth century to replace an earlier structure destroyed by a flood in 1760. Its interior has, unfortunately, been subjected to alterations.

The churches of the city, however, are outdone by the lovely church which crowns a hill high up above, the Church of San Cayetano at Valenciana. Starting there one day, and not knowing which of the twisting streets to take to reach it, we stopped on the stone pavement in front of the Church of San Francisco to inquire of a passer-by. The inevitable crowd quickly gathered, and many small boys were soon clamoring for the job as guide. The competition became so furious that we seemed to be completely thwarted in our desires until a wise onlooker suggested that someone get the uniformed policeman who directs the one-way traffic at the entrance to the Jardín de la Unión to decide. Leaving his little box at the corner, Solomon soon arrived, greeted us with extreme graciousness (we were the only Americans in town and had already made the acquaintance of the one apparent officer of the law) and listened with patience to the pleas of the competitors. I think the officer was rather inclined to take the job for himself, but, after the arguments had been heard, he carefully made his appointment: one of the boys, very gravely accepting the responsibility accorded him, climbed

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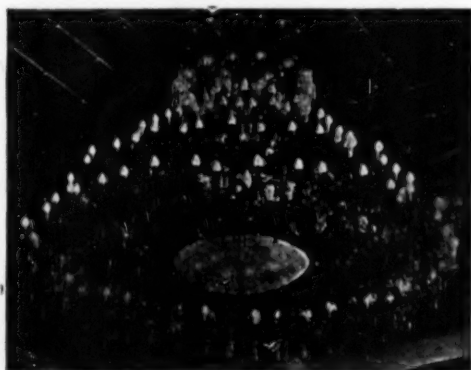
into the car; and the others, without any protest, withdrew. The law had decided.

The Conde del Kul, owner of the richest of the mines in the Guanajuato area, was a figure quite as colorful as José de la Borda. The output of his mine at Valenciana, formerly a thriving village and now an almost deserted one, is said to have exceeded eight hundred million pesos. Although the Count has the reputation for having squandered at the rate of a million pesos a month the fortune he made, enough was put aside for the building of the beautiful Church of San Cayetano, on which, as in the great church in Taxco, no expense was spared. It is even locally said that silver was used in the mortar, mixed with the choicest wines from Spain. The total cost, however, was not paid by the Count, who insisted that it be made a co-operative project. As his contribution in paying the expenses of the construction, and for the maintenance of an elaborate service after the church was completed, each of the thousands of workers employed in the mines gave every week the value of a piedra de mano, "a piece of ore the size of his fist."

The name of the architect is not known, the archives of the church having been destroyed during the War of Independence, but while the church was being built, the parish cura at Guanajuato, jealous of the imposing structure rising on the hills beyond his city, claimed that license had been given for a chapel, not a basilica. The controversy delayed construction for some time; but a compromise was finally reached when the Count agreed to complete only one tower, and the work proceeded. The church was dedicated on August 7, 1788.

It was thought at one time that the church covered a rich mineral deposit; and the Count was offered a large sum for the property on which the church stood, the offer including the removal of the church, stone by stone, and its re-erection on another site—an offer which the Count treated with disdain.

Standing on a wind-swept eminence far above the twisting, climbing streets and irregular piles of flat-roofed houses of Guanajuato, the usually deserted church has fortunately escaped the hand of the restorer and remains one of the most beautiful of the churches of Mexico. The treatment of the facade around and above the entrance is not at all like that of the parochial church of Taxco, nor does it have any of the bold relief of the San Diego church in Guanajuato. In fact, it is quite unlike anything else in the country. It is Churrigueresque, carried out with such orderliness and with such a degree of refinement that it might better be called Ultra-Plateresque. The Churrigueresque "order" is there, but done with such delicacy as it blends into the other ornament that the total result is a feeling of delicate verticality quite akin to that of the west front of Santiago de Com-



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Back in the city there is one secular structure which deserves special mention, not only for its architectural merit but for its bloody history—the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, built as a granary to prevent a recurrence of the terrible famine of the "year of hunger" of 1783—84, then used as a fortress, and finally converted into the city prison. Standing at the top of a steep street occupied largely by displays of pottery for sale, the building, begun in 1798 and completed ten years later, is one of the few good examples of architecture done under the influence of a Classic Interlude. It is extremely severe and massive, the Doric pilasters of its facade surmounted by an entablature with ornament on the frieze very successfully Greek in spirit.

It was in the massive structure that the Spaniards took refuge in 1810, when Hidalgo and his forces took Guanajuato; and it was there that they resisted assault until a young peón, named José Barajas but affectionately known as Pipila, with a torch in his hand and a great stone tied on his back for protection from the rain of bullets, made his way on hands and knees to set fire to one of the doors of the building and admit his fellow patriots. A large statue of Pipila now stands on an eminence behind the Church of San Diego, overlooking from its height the little Jardín de la Unión. When, some months later, Hidalgo and his supporters, Aldama, Allende, and Jimenez,

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were executed at Chihuahua, their heads were brought to Guanajuato and hung in iron cages which swung from hooks at the four corners of the Alhóndiga, where they remained for ten years, until March of 1821, when Independence was won. Those great hooks are still to be seen on the corners of the building, decorated now with wreaths of flowers.

• • •

Yes, Guanajuato is dramatic. It has known extremes of wealth; and it has known famine and flood and extremes of poverty. Its history has been bloody. But it has a fascination unlike that of any other city in Mexico, and nowhere can be found more striking contrasts in architecture and in atmosphere. At the "approach" end of the city, near the railway station and almost hidden in a little valley of its own behind rather squalid houses, is a lovely park with flower-bordered walks and lined on one curving side with houses of three stories quite Mediterranean in character, with wrought iron balconies on the front profuse with blossoms of many hues. The houses have no back. They are built against a high cliff.

It may be the influence of Mexican legends, in which, so many times, dreams have played an important part, that causes me to exercise what is often considered doubtful taste in relating a dream I once had—a most vivid picture that I never forgot. The scene was one reached very quickly on leaving the busy streets of a modern city, and showed narrow, twisting, crooked streets in the dusk, with little wrought-iron street lanterns at the corners, a small irregular square beyond, with a beautiful fountain, noisy laughter behind the swinging doors of brightly lighted cafés and soft muffled laughter behind other half-closed doors, a bent old lady in a shawl scurrying by, holding tightly to her waist a market basket slung on her arm. I had thought it might be the Latin Quarter of Paris where I once had studied and through which I had wandered so many times, but on going again to Europe and returning there, I could not find it even where the rue Saint Julien le Pauvre twists toward the Seine, nor in the little streets around

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Saint Germain des Prés. Arles came close to it, and so did Perugia, but neither quite fitted the picture; and Spanish Segovia, picturesque as it is, was not sufficiently intimate; and I had to give it up.

After dinner my first evening in Guanajuato, having tramped the length of the fascinating city in the direction whence we had first arrived, I left the brightly lighted little square with its clipped Indian laurel trees and turned into the narrow, curving street at the opposite end of the Jardín, where I had not yet explored. Other narrow streets which it intersected led to a small plaza with a monumental fountain in the center. I wandered along other curving streets which led from the plaza, and wound up most unexpectedly where I had started, I climbed up steep streets of steps, arriving at other little squares, wandering on and on, always suddenly finding myself again at the fountain. As I turned back to the street leading toward my hotel, it was dark and I could faintly hear the band playing in the Jardín and the scuffle of feet promenading on the tile walk which surrounds the clipped Indian laurel trees. I stopped at a corner under a little wrought-iron street lantern. As I looked back at the square with the beautiful fountain, noisy laughter came from behind the swinging doors of a cantina across the street and soft muffled laughter came from behind a half-open door near by. I stood as if rooted to the spot. It all seemed so familiar—but I had never been there. A bent old lady scurried by, clinging tightly to a market basket which only partly protruded from the rebozo in which she was tightly wrapped from head to waist.

As I wandered on back to my hotel, my mind was filled with one thought, which can be expressed by one old word—Eureka!

#### Bus Driver

Continued from page 10

is on the route Cuernavaca—Jiutepec—Emiliano Zapata, making four twenty-five-mile round trips a day. He receives fifteen percent of the fares, which comes to about two and a half dollars a day—the wage of a highly skilled laborer. Depending on the demands of his company, he may have one day off a week, or two or none at all for a month or more.

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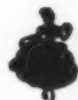
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kets and babies and with produce and merchandise for the market. Chavez and his conductor pile their loads on the roof.

On the road the passengers jounce together in quiet amiability, but sometimes there is trouble. "A man goes to a fiesta or to market, and he drinks too much pulque. He won't pay his fare, or he wants to fight. Then," says Gabriel, "I stop the bus and tell him he should be ashamed for his gross behavior, and all the others uphold me. Most of the time he is quiet, but when he wants to fight I must expel him. There is no great difficulty, even if he carries a machete or a gun. Everybody helps."

Gabriel Chavez lives in one of the villages along his route. In Emiliano Zapata, named after the great hero of the agrarian revolution, there is only one address: "Domicilio Conocido"—Residence known. Zapata was drawn into the world outside by the injustices of feudalism. Chavez, a big man in his tiny community, has become part of the greater world through a bus route. Zapata rode a horse. The sons of the men who rode behind him are riding behind Chavez now, and when they are drunk he pushes them out to walk off their tempers.

"One time a drunk was riding and he was talking very loud—ugly things, you understand. Another man told him to be decent. Then the drunk became angry and he said an evil word." Gabriel lowered his voice. "It was a thing beginning with 'thy mother,' You know?" He looked at me anxiously to see whether I was offended. It was a very bad oath indeed.

"So then an old lady rose and struck the 'borracho' across the face with a live chicken. That one was so shamed that he made me stop, and he went out saying he would never ride again."

The conductor chuckled. "Aie, que tiempos!"

Gabriel remarked seriously, "The woman was right. No good drunk would say such a thing. He was a barbarian, that one."

"All the same," he added, pronouncing his final judgment, "the woman should not have been carrying a chicken. All animals must ride on top."

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